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# Our Town

by

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# Chapter 1

TODAY only a few evidences remain of the horse and buggy culture of Du Quoin. A few hitching posts or rings set in concrete in front of business houses on Main street, a number of big barns standing at the back of the older residences, a blacksmith shop or two, the building which formerly housed Maclin's Livery Service, and the customer's observance of harness in some of the places of business are just about all that remain to remind one of the days when genuine main to remind one of the days when genuine horse power was used.

Many citizens of Du Quoin will remember the familiar "watering troughs," the livery barns, the family surreys, and the runaways. Since these were the golden days of youth for many, a flood of pleasant memories came pouring back into the realm of conscious thought. Some will remember when, they as barefoot boys, hooked rides on wagons. Perched precariously on the coupling pole with feet dangling and talking with a friendly driver, a boy would ride from one neighborhood to another. The old two-wheeled dray with its heavy wooden wheels and steel rims crunching the gravelled streets, the play of the well-greased hub on the axle were familiar and pleasant sounds. Some boys, temporarily beyond the scope of their mothers' indulgent care, enjoyed covering the "slop route" with the friendly colored man who came daily down the alley to collect from the well-filled garbage pails. On occasion, the boy was given the greasy rope lines and permitted to drive while the colored man collected the contributions. So far as the boy was concerned the lowly "slop wagon" had become a chariot and he was Ben Hur!

Farmers with their comfortable wives sitting beside them came to town in heavy wagons marked "Studebaker", "Oldendorf" (a Du Quoin product), and other popular makes, with the wagon bed filled with straw, and the cane-bottomed dining room chairs seating the farmer's healthy brood of pink-cheeked children. Driving to a vacant lot in the business section, the family alighted, the horses unhitched from the wagon tongue and tied to the side, and the wagon bed used as a manger. Here the horses stood all day peacefully munching hay and corn the farmer had brought along. Hand in hand the children followed their parents down the street, the little ones with wide-eyed excitement being yanked along by the older ones. Along the way the family exchanged greetings or stopped to talk with friends. Congregating in little bunches in the middle of the sidewalk the farmers laughed and joked with one another. The serious conversation ran along the topics of farm prices, milch cows, hog production, and checking upon each other as to the general progress of their farm duties. In the stores they traded their eggs and any other farm produce they had brought along for coffee, sugar, calico and other needs. The children were permitted round white peppermint drops, red and white striped barber pole candy or gum drops.

Back to the wagon at noon where lunch brought from the farm supplemented by such town fodder as cheese, crackers, and bologna, was eaten. This was washed down by water, or, if the father felt indulgent, some of that new-fangled soda water made by Will Hayes. Back to the stores the farmer herded his progeny into the stores for shoes. Here childish feet accustomed to a summer of freedom were coaxed into black buttoned shoes. Whistles and clickers donated to the children encouraged their cooperation in the process.

Late in the afternoon, tired, but still happy, the families could be seen turning down Main street loaded in their wagons making the return home. Long yellow bananas, speckled with brown as an evidence of their luscious ripeness bought by the dozen from a bunch suspended by a cord in front of one of the stores, were eaten on the way home.

Another familiar vehicle on Main street in those days was the old sprinkler wagon driven by the Civil War veteran, Captain Moses Martin. Main Street in summer was as dry as the Sahara and without the frequent sprinkling the stores would have been more dust laden than they were.

The carriages and vehicles of the town folk were open to their best inspection on Sunday mornings. Single-seated runabouts with narrow bodies on rubber tired wheels were driven by the childless couples. Families appeared in the two-seated surrey with a flat top and fringes dangling down the sides. Then, as now, wealth and prosperity was gauged by the expensiveness of the turn out. Somehow these vehicles always had an expensive squeak. Custom and necessity demanded that one dress well when riding to and from church, or on any occasion when riding in the surrey was done. Fathers wearing heavy checked suits, exhibiting generous stomachs and vests, decorated with heavy gold chains from which hung the emblems of their lodge, were proud of the pictures they and their families made to the passersby. Mothers with their big

hats, wasp waists, and long skirts were equally certain that the Joneses and the Smiths thought they all looked nice. The boys in the back seat wore expressions of martyrdom. For on their heads they wore a "sissy" hat, broad-brimmed straw with a fancy ribbon around it and hanging down a few inches at the back. How they hated those hats! The shirts the boys wore were frilly affairs which their mothers called "waists." The pants served only to increase the belligerency of the boys forced to ride all dressed up with their sisters. The pants were made straight and tight-fitting ending just above the knee. Three buttons set in a row decorated each pant leg. And worst of all there were no pockets! Their sisters looked sweet and lady like in their stiff-starched dresses, and, according to to their age, had definitely decided that all boys are stupid animals.

The "young man about town" or the eligible bachelors usually presented a dashing and colorful picture to the Main Street scene. They owned the snappiest rigs and the fastest horses. Speed was known in those days and the young man prided himself on the appearance and speed of his horse.

Young women of that time were just as elert to the possibilities of "going with" a fellow with a good looking turnout as they are car conscious today. The buggy as a means of conveyance in courtship offered opportunities unknown to the automobile. With the automobile, however, the young man is always reminded that he needs at least one hand on the wheel. In a buggy with an old Dobbin who knew his way around and the reins thrown across the dashboard only those who actually know its possibilities can tell!

The travelling salesman or "drummer" as he was called in those days was often seen on Du Quoin streets. He rented a "rig" at the livery stable and drove around to the neighborhood stores, to St. Johns, Sunfield, Old Du Quoin, and any other outlying stores. Some of the drummers were staid business men with families who remembered their wives and children. Some, who had them, suffered from occasional lapses of memory and became notorious flirts.

Du Quoin had several enterprising livery services from time to time. The livery stable to a small town boy was an interesting place to be. The building itself was large as barns go, with a driveway running through the center. At the front was the office where the keeper appeared to live a life of ease. His hours were long, but he usually hired someone else to do the hard work. He took calls and fraternized with the drummers and visitors. Along the interior of the driveway came the aroma of hay, sweat, and horse manure. The odor was not altogether unpleasant as any man or woman who loves horses can testify. Down the row of stalls it was fun to read the names of the horses and to peer in at the stall of a favorite, hoping that he would be in. With a lump of sugar, a piece of candy or an apple many a boy and a horse became pals. Sometimes the industrious boy who was ready to work was given employment at the wash rack washing buggies or the less pleasant task of cleaning the stalls.

Out on Gypsy Hill, the site where the Du Quoin Packing Company now stands, the roving and colorful bands of Gypsy horse traders held forth. Great was the excitement of the children when a tribe of four or five wagons rolled through the town with the usual motley assortment of dogs and horses. Quite a number of Du Quoin people paid the Gypsy camp a visit on June 4, 1912, for the purpose of witnessing the celebration of the engagement of the son of the chieftain of the tribe to one of the young women of the tribe. The Majestic orchestra provided music and Constable Jones the protection!

Not all the memories associated with the horse and buggy days are pleasant. Occasionally one saw worn and emaciated horses hardly more than racks of bone and hide drawing ramshackle hacks along the street. Sometimes from old age and lack of nourishment the horses fell in the shafts and lay on their sides breathing feebly. Children were always around observing the death agonies with their hearts full of pity. Loaded on a cart sometimes covered with gunny sacks and sometimes not, the horses lay sprawled with bloated bellies and glassy eyes in their ride to the boneyard. The sad ending to youthful minds reminded them of the proud horse, Ginger, in the story of horse life "Black Beauty," which all children read.

Sometimes, exasperated and short tempered teamsters applied severe beatings to horses attempting to pull an overloaded wagon that had become mired down in an alley or side street. Oaths that painted the air blue usually accompanied this situation to add to the regretfullness of the occasion. At times men made enemies when they stepped in to prevent this undue punishment. During these days one heard frequently of the "Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals." The balky mule or horse was another thing and anyone who had ever experienced this annoyance usually sympathized more with the driver than with the horse. If the horse belonged to someone else and the other fellow was having the trouble the situation became quite amusing. When coaxing and beating failed, a fire built under the obstinate animal would bring results

but sometimes at the expense of a burned wagon bed if the horse moved forward only a few steps.

Runaways provided plenty of excitement and never failed to break the monotony of an otherwise dull and listless day. The mad and frenzied snorting of the frightened animals, the clatter of wagon, or buggy, the screaming of women folk in the vehicle or among the spectators, the determined set of the man's jaw as he attempted to stop the horses, always succeeded in arousing excitement and a topic of conversation for several days. If an attractive girl happened to be alone in the runaway carriage any young man along the street had the opportunity of proving himself a heel or a hero. Heroism was not confined to the men as this quotation from the "Call" will verify:

"Miss Ruth Kimmel was at her home on South Street when she saw a horse and buggy coming up the street at breakneck speed. She rushed out and grabbed the horse by the bit, jerked it back and soon had it stopped, probably preventing a bad disaster."

The above statement, however, happens to be an exaggeration since the action in the story was supplied by Miss Kimmel's brother, Will, who told the story to the "Call" reporter as a joke on his sister. Actually a blind and aged horse standing at the curb near the Kimmel home had started to amble down the street and Miss Kimmel had tied him to a hitching post.

The "Call" files indicate a number of runaway accidents created by a variety of causes. John Huntley, delivery boy for Beck Brothers' Meat Market, was driving east on Park Street and when he reached the Washington Street corner he met a traction engine which frightened the horse and caused it to run away. Connie Ross' horse was frightened at a boy riding a bicycle The Bottling Works delivery team was frightened by "No. 21" when it came plunging down the track and caused a serious runaway. A goat running loose with a chain tied to it caused another.

Raymond Pyatt's team hitched to a surry, June 30, 1911, ran away when they became frightened at a hose used to sprinkle lawns. The team ran down the alley, turned down West Main from South Washington and strewed the contents of the surrey all along the street. At Ig. Koerner's corner they turned south and threw the surrey into a telephone pole. The horses broke lose and ran to the home of Frank Wells where they were caught. In a later runaway Joe Werner stopped the horse drawing a buggy in which four girls, Laura and Lela Hatfield and Lucille and Eugenia Center were the frightened occupants. Another runaway jumped the hitching post in front of Pope's Store and was badly injured. On August 5, 1909, a bad runaway was averted by a young man. The woman occupant of the buggy had lost control when a young man ran out to the street and grabbed the horse by the bridle. The horse stepped on his heel and injured him painfully. While the "Call" published a number of runaways it is certain that even a greater number went unreported.

These are only a few of the incidents relating to the days of Old Dobbin and it certain many more of greater interest lie within the memories of Du Quoin's older residents. The next article in this series will give some incidents dealing with the earliest appearance of the automobile in Du Quoin and its effect upon the lives of the people.

# *Chapter 2*

"Come along with me Lucille,
In my merry Oldsmobile,
You can go as far as you like with me
In my merry Oldsmobile."

THE Du Quoin Evening Call files of the first decade of this century reveal a variety of interesting information regarding the earliest automobiles and their use.

One day in 1904 the Haines Brothers' automobile arrived in Du Quoin and made quite a stir among the local machine drivers. According to the reporter it was about as handsome as the Oldsmobile of L. D. Skinner and Fred and Ray Linzee. On April 30, 1904, Du Quoin's fourth automobile made its appearance. It was a Cadillac and belonged to ex-Mayor W. B. Hall. A Rambler runabout became the property of Edgar E. Sims. Another was ordered by S. B. Eaton. "When these two arrive and are seen on Main Street at the same time as the fine automobiles already in operation in Du Quoin, it will resemble one of the boulevards in the large cities," was the enthusiastic reporter's comment. A total of 7 comprised Du Quoin's automobile population in 1904.

It is difficult to determine just what Du Quoin man owned the first automobile in the city. In interviewing several older automobile men it apears that the first was owned by one of three; namely, Dr. D. Winton Dunn, George Fritz, or W. B. Hall. Added to the early automobilists already mentioned is the name of Dr. Gillis who owned a Rambler similar to the one owned by Edgar E. Sims. It appears, however, that Dr. Dunn was probably the first within the memory of a number of Du Quoin citizens. To one citizen the automobile of Mr. Fritz could be truly called a "banana special." That kindly gentleman operated a store in Sellew's Addition and made frequent pilgrimages to town for a stalk of bananas. His car could be heard for blocks and the children followed behind the mechanical Pied Piper. Not only was the auto itself an attraction, but the stalk of bananas thrown in the back of the machine, shed its ripest bananas with each bump. The speed was such that the boys had no difficulty in folowing the "banana trail"!

These early automobiles in chassis construction and body lines were patterned after the buggy. It is natural, of course, that they would have that appearance, since all the things we know of speed and wind resistance were far in the future. The seat was built high in the air on a narrow body with narrow solid rubber wheels. One entered Mr. Hall's Cadillac from the rear. A chain drive, loaded with grease and dust, transmitted the motive power. The earliest automobiles were guided with a stick lever. Linzee's Oldsmobile was guided by a stick as was the Rambler belonging to Ed Sims. Horace Sims, who bought the Rambler originally, paid $25 extra for a steering wheel. The first starter was on an automobile belonging to Dr. Dunn. The motor was started with a leather strap. When the doctor came out of his office to make a call, people gathered around to see him spin the motor. As a rule night driving was not done but when caught out after dark a feeble and sputtering flame from kerosene lamps provided a ray of light and hope to the driver. The horn was a rubber bulb affair which, when properly squeezed, gave forth a blatant call-like sound.

The motor was as unreliable as noisy. Patience and mechanical ability were two standard prerequisites of one who drove an automobile. With their feeble two-cylinder motors the things seemed to possess balky horse cunning when approaching an incline on the road and proceeded to increase not only their noise but to decrease their pull. When leaning forward with strained expressions failed, the occupants piled out and began to push. It was then that the confirmed horse and buggy people were set against the "horseless carriage"—they preferred a horse attached to pull them through!

Whether the automobile ambled down Main Street or chugged along a country road it never failed to be a menace in frightening the horses. Tied to the hitching racks, the horses reared and tugged at the hitch-straps, their nostrils quivering with fright. On the open road they took to their heels with their drivers tugging at the lines and swearing that the contraptions and the fools in them were a pain in the neck!

Driving or riding in an early auto within the city and especially in the country demanded a special regalia. Full length linen dusters, goggles, and a pair of gauntlets were essential habiliments of the automobilist's equipment. One couldn't drive a block without being covered with dust. A person returned from the country with his face covered with good Perry County soil and with rims of white appearing around his eyes, where the goggles had kept them clean. Obviously these paraphernalia were not needed in the winter—and neither was the car. That magnificent vehicle had hibernated for the winter. In the barn with each wheel jacked high and resting on bricks it gathered dust until spring. Careful people covered them with tarpaulins and

even took the tires off and wrapped them in paper to check their deterioration.

Speed and lots of it was demanded by the earliest automobilists if this account published in 1905 may be considered: "Dr. D. Winton Dunn, the most enthusiastic automobilist in Perry County, is rapidly assuming a position among the foremost rank of the Southern Illinois scorchers. He recently purchased a machine of the "Ford" type and with which he expects to shatter speed records in the future. With a party of four, including himself, he drove to Pinckneyville and covered the distance in 47 minutes, after making three stops. On the return he exceeded this speed by a spin of 44 minutes, including two dead stops. The machine was urged to its capacity over all hills going and coming with the exception of the incline near Shakerag, where the corduroy road compelled the driver to lessen the speed."

Dr. Dunn shared honors with S. R. Haines of Tamaroa as a racing enthusiast. At the Pinckneyville fair in 1906 they put the crowd in a panic when they raced around the half-mile dirt track at the terrific speed of 20 miles per hour! A man who saw the race says he can see them now as they leaned over when taking the turns!

As late as 1910 automobile purchases made news. With the purchase of each new machine appeared a news item in the paper. In March, 1910, Leslie Eaton bought a car load of Overland automobiles. "Yesterday he sold P. N. Pope a machine. He has also made sales to Dr. T. B. Reagin and Howard Pope and we understand that S. B. Ward and John Forester are thinking seriously of buying."

Harvey Eddleman had the first Ford agency in Du Quoin. He obtained the agency in 1909 and in the spring of 1910 had sold several machines, and, in the words of the "Call" reporter: "It looks as if Du Quoin people sure enough have the auto fever." Sims-Haines of Tamaroa acquired the agency in 1912 and moved into their new building on North Oak Street in the building now occupied by Martin's Hatchery.

Trips by auto received notice in the paper. For example, in May of 1910, C. M. Bergman and his family made a hundred mile trip in their auto, going to Chester and return. They made the trip without accident, but after getting into town on the way home, they hit the mud and came near going into a ditch. In the same year Leslie Eaton drove his car to Centralia. "On the way home the party got stuck in the mud and had to walk to Tamaroa in a soaking rain. He was accompanied by Laura Zeigler, Miss Smeltzer of Centralia and James Cross." Every Monday the personal items of the paper contained accounts of trips to nearby towns.

The year 1910 was particularly eventful in the appearance of the famous automobile driver, Barney Oldfield. "He tarried very briefly as is his usual custom." Locally, James Sims appeared a match for the famous Oldfield, with this quotation as evidence:

"The horseless car was declared winner of a 9-mile race from Tamaroa to Du Quoin. The race was between a passenger train and an auto. As Train No. 23 left town last night a Ford automobile driven by James Sims with Ira Brown as a passenger was also leaving and the race was on. At the Kimzey home place the auto crossed the I. C. tracks in front of the speeding passenger. When 23 pulled in Tamaroa Messrs. Sims and Brown were at the station awaiting its arrival!"

In 1912 one motored from Du Quoin to St. Louis in 6 hours. During that year, however, James Sims went to St. Louis and drove a new Ford home to Tamaroa for Sims and Haines Auto Co. and was just 3 hours and 45 minutes on the road. From Sparta to Pinckneyville he consumed 45 minutes, and ran over only four geese, two chickens, and one dog! In 1915 he entered his racing car, Stearns 30, for the Thanksgiving day races at the White City Speedway in Centralia. Not only was Mr. Sims expert in automobile driving but was eagerly sought by other automobilists as a mechanic. On one occasion a man came all the way from Tennessee to secure Mr. Sims' mechanical services.

In 1914 automobile riding was still a novelty. On August 4, 1914, between the hours of 5 and 7 p. m., the Pope Shoe and Clothing Company gave free auto rides to the children of Du Quoin. This offer of a mile spin brought joy to more than 50 youngsters who were loaded aboard in relays. To most of them this ride was their first.

Du Quoin may have enjoyed the distinction of being the first to introduce an entirely new phase in transportation—the bus. For in 1914, an "automobile line," as it was called, was inaugurated. Trips were made daily except Sunday to Pinckneyville and return for $1 each way for each passenger!

# Chapter 3

IN 1914 people were buying and selling cars and the business was firmly established. Alderman E. F. Knauer bought a new Krit electrically equipped 5-passenger car. Sims-Haines Motor Co. had a double-page ad in the "Call" (unusual for the time) showing four models of the new Maxwell touring car at $750. A dealer was selling the Paige automobile at $1,275. Charles Weinberg bought a new Studebaker. Mr. A. C. Jakle and Ed Provart had King cars at $1,165. Their cars featured the Neville "More-Room" steering wheel —one which pushed up out of the way to provide easier entrance and exit. Arthur Angel had bought a new Reo of the latest model. J. W. Mayor had purchased a new Regal. Pope and Company were agents for Buick. Enough automobiles had appeared that the "Call" announced that 30 autos would appear in the giant parade held in connection with the Odd Fellows' celebration.

The popularity and continued use of the automobile demanded good roads. Automobilists of Tamaroa cooperated at various times to drag the roads between Tamaroa and Sunfield to enable them to make the trip to Du Quoin more easily. In boosting for the "Egyptian Trail" auto route from Chicago to Cairo, cars left Du Quoin for meeting in Carbondale with banners reading "Du Quoin for the Egyptian Trail." In 1912 the Illinois State Fair Association, to demonstrate the necessity for hard roads in Illinois, offered gold, silver and bronze watch fobs to "Call" readers who drove their cars to the State Fair October 4-12 of that year.

The appearance around 1914 of heavier and more expensive automobiles served as an impetus to the sale of the less costly Ford. With the prices of the touring car at $490, the runabout at $440, and the town car at $690 F. O. B. Detroit, Henry Ford's fame and fortune was established. The Ford agency here outsold its competitors by far. With its light weight, narrow tires, high bodies, and low prices the farmers adopted it and relegated Old Dobbin to the plow and wagon. Every farmer knew in the winter the depth of each rut and whether Lizzie could climb in and out or be obliged to straddle its way. The Ford went and came back while the more expensive cars sank deeply in the mire. Because of its low price, the Ford was popular in the city and was eagerly bought as the Ford or "Tin Lizzie" jokes multiplied.

A serious competitor of the Ford was Chevrolet, pronounced "Chev-ro-lay" as the ads carried it. The first man to buy a Chevrolet in Du Quoin was Mr. Henry Croessman. Bought Feb. 27, 1914, this popular car soon had many brothers and sisters from the Detroit assembly line. Small, compactly built, and serviceable, this car was destined, perhaps, more than any other single competition to cause Henry Ford to abandon his Model T for the Model A. It was sold locally in 1916 by Eddleman and Coker.

Du Quoin made its contribution in the invention of automobile parts. On January 3, 1919, a puncture-proof automobile wheel invented by Schuyler C. Hatfield, brother of C. C. and C. H. Hatfield, was demonstrated at the New Merchants Hotel. The invention may be explained as follows: "The wheel treads on a cushion tire of solid rubber, while a pneumatic tube encircles the hub. One of its chief advantages is in having the weight of the car several inches removed from the ground. It also claims better and easier travel on less gasoline without the annoyance of expensive punctures and blowouts." Subscriptions to stock were sold, but evidently the invention was not generally adopted because of lack of promotion or practical value.

Automobilists of Du Quoin received a new excitement in December, 1927. With the advent of faster and more luxurious cars Henry Ford had been losing some of his leadership in the enormous low-priced car market. People were no longer content to roar slowly uphill with a weary left foot jammed against the low speed pedal while Chevrolets swept past them in second. So Henry Ford decided to change and publicly announced a new car would be placed on the market. Great was the suspense as months passed. Rumors broke into the front page of the "Call." At last the great day arrived, when a full-page picture of the wonder car of America appeared on a full-page spread of the "Call," Dec. 2, 1927. People flocked to the Ford agency to see it and for weeks every new Ford that appeared on the streets drew a crowd. It was the big event of 1927.

Checking back over the automobile ads one discovers a long list of automobiles, many of them manufactured no longer. They are as follows: Metz, Dort, Velie, Scripps-Booth, Samson, Essex, Moon, Detroiter, Case, Chandler, Gardner, Willys-Knight, Rickenbacker, Studebaker, Moline-Knight, Nash, Columbia, Cleveland, Hudson, Buick, Reo, Paige, Oldsmobile, Cadillac, Overland, Chevrolet, Ford, Marmon, Dodge, Chrysler, Maxwell, Rambler, Durant, Oakland, Star, Whippet, Saxon, Chalmers, Franklin, Monroe, Haynes,

Hupmobile, Packard, Stearns-Knight, Stutz, Pierce-Arrow, and Lincoln.

The appearance of the automobile on the streets of Du Quoin played a conspicuous part in changing the social and economic life of its people. Appearing first as a novelty on the dusty streets it possessed a definite nuisance value in frightening the horses and in creating a lot of din and confusion. Little did the indulgent townspeople realize how much this new-fangled contraption would change their mode of living. Old timers who swore they would never ride in the "darn fool things" were buying them within only a few years. The general acceptance of the automobile by the people of Du Quoin was only a part of the same thing that was happening all over the nation.

The Sunday afternoon "stroll" down Main Street to the depot became a thing of the past. Walking to and from one's work was reduced and miners were obliged no longer to live within sight of the mine tipple. The distance one lived from his work might be 10 or 15 miles. Patronage on the miners' coaches was reduced until finally in the early '30s the train was discontinued.

Family visiting habits were changed. The auto was used for week-end trips visiting with relatives and friends. Money which was exhausted formerly in buying the childrens' shoes and clothing until there was no money left to buy railroad tickets no longer interfered, since most parents tossed the kids in the family car and hit the open road. The old time trunk gave way to the steamer trunk or to the inexpensive suit case placed on the running board within the new luggage carrier.

Even the time worn system of burial was changed. No longer did the black hearse, followed by somber carriages, slowly wend its way to the final resting place of the Du Quoin citizen. With the automobile the tempo of travel was increased to the extent that the skeptic would say: "Hump! I'll get there fast enough in the old-fashioned way!"

Vacations became available to an increasing number of families. Formerly only prosperous merchants and professional men and their families were financially able to take the vacation trips advertised by the railroad to Niagara Falls, Denver and the Yelowstone. With the automobiles, families adopted the "camping out" technique. The women slept in the auto and the men on boards placed between the running boards of two cars. Some travelers used tents and many a man at the end of an arduous day of travel was obliged to wrestle with his wigwam. Wives and children stood back patiently while their husbands and fathers struggled manfully and sometimes with sonorous imprecations in setting up the accomodations for the night. Fortunately the tourist camps appeared with their comfortable cabins, or many of those men who had ventured away from Du Quoin at one time with a tent, would have spent the remainder of their lives within the city limits.

Payments on the car became a necessary item in the family budget. For many, the automobile became their chief and only luxury. Finance companies developed and prospered. Sacrifices on other necessities were made to keep up the payments and to keep up with the Joneses. But it was worth it. Railroads were discontinuing passenger trains and one was obliged to own an automobile to go anywhere.

Simultaneously with the increased use of the automobile came the paving of state highways, locally called the "hard road" or the "slab." During the administration of Len Small, "the Hard Roads Governor," and the popularity of the song parody "Highways are Happy Ways for They Lead to Home, Sweet Home" the paved highway building reached unprecedented proportions. The roads brought the filling stations which issued free maps and provided sanitary toilet facilities. The first filing station in Du Quoin was erected by Mr. A. C. Willi at the corner of North Division and Park Street.

The tempo of living was speeded up and run in high gear. Distance was minimized. Trips to Murphysboro, Pinckneyville, Carbondale, Mount Vernon, and Benton formerly received notice in the personal column of the "Call." Too many people made these visits in the automobile to be worthy of publication. The high school basketball teams which had formerly stayed overnight in a nearby town with whom they played now drove to the town, played the game, and returned home all in the same evening.

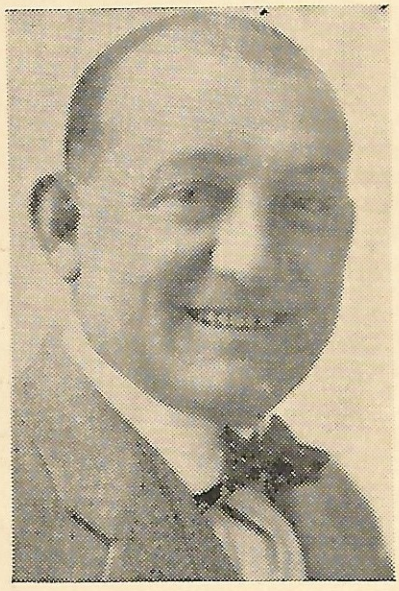
The people of Du Quoin became, as thousands of other Americans, "a people on wheels," and the auto continues to this day as a dominating feature in American life. Only time and the present European conflagration can determine the next phase of our means of transportation.

# Chapter 4

ANY Du Quoin citizen who had the occasion to walk down South Mulberry street at certain times during the early nineties would have noticed this poster on the front lawn of the house occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Joe Curtis:

biG Tent ShOW ToDay!
In BAcKyard at 2 P. m.
FeAturinG tHe Boy CommeDioN
MiSter GeOrgE CuRtis
In
JeD, the POoR HousE BOY!!!
By HoRatio ALGer jR.
ADmiSSHun 5 buTTonS eAcH
noTicE
(NO buTTonS with BUsteD hOleS EXcePTeD)

If the hour were around "show time" and his interest sufficiently aroused, the visitor might have strolled around the house to see this temple of youthful histronic effort. Midway of the yard, with the clothesline serving as a center support, stood a nondescript object made of carpets, sacks and ancient canvas, which flared at the sides like a fat lady's bustle. Before the doorway which was covered with a faded sofa-cover sat a small and attractive girl behind the "ticket office"—a box marked "Merry War Lye" in large red letters. Into a cigar box well laden with childhood's medium of exchange, the visitor might have tossed a coin and received the embarrassed and excited "Thank you, mister!" from the little girl.



**George Curtis**

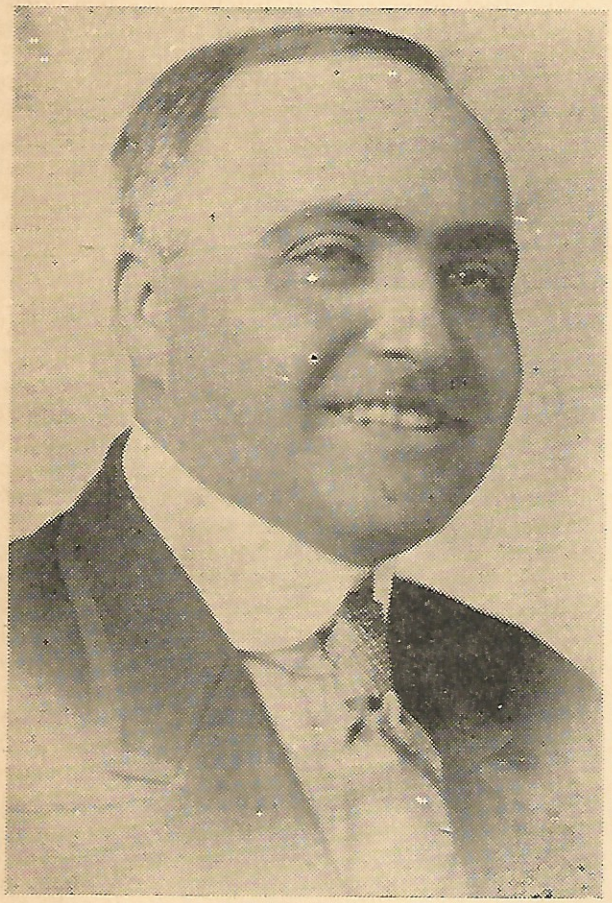
Inside, perched on boards laid across cracker boxes, sat the kids of the neighborhood. So intent were they in the deep drama unfolding before their eyes the visitor in the doorway went unnoticed. On an improvised stage covered with a faded and tattered carpet stood the "boy commedian," Mister George Curtis, who had thrown aside his comedy role for the present and was now explaining to a tall anemic youth with a walrus mustache painted on his face, how he had been robbed by a too friendly man he had met on the train. Although their attention was fastened chiefly upon George, the audience turned rather longing and wistful eyes upon the tall sheriff when that individual slowly pulled from his pocket a plug of licorice molded in the shape of the familiar Horseshoe their fathers chewed. After a series of scenes in which Jed overcame his adversities to become engaged to the banker's daughter in the final scene, the production came to a glorious climax when George planted a hurried stage kiss upon the cheek of the blushing heroine.

Like life, however, all is not idyllic in childhood's game of play. The scene changes to next morning. It is Sunday. A knock was heard on the Curtis door. It was Mrs. Albert Upchurch who lived across the street where Mr. Philip Cook lives now.

"May I examine the buttons George took in at the show yesterday?" was the petition of Mrs. Upchurch. By this time George had come to the door and promptly presented the box containing the receipts of the preceeding day. Buttons of every size, color, and shape awaited the inspection. Pushing them around with her index finger Mrs. Upchurch retrieved four large brown buttons and, with a sigh of relief expressing both satisfaction and annoyance, explained:

"My husband started to put on his Sunday suit this morning only to discover every button had been whacked off at the roots! I recalled that the children had taken every loose button out of the house to attend these shows George is giving and knew what had happened. If George doesn't change his admission soon we won't have a button left on any of our clothes!"

In a barn on Keyes street and in sheds on Division, another youthful bard during the late nineties was holding the children spellbound and in stitches with his droll comedy. This was Billie Plumlee, only son of Du Quoin's veteran night policeman, William Plumlee, Sr. And while the remainder of Du Quoin citizens suffered from an acute button shortage, it is certain that the



**William "Billie" Plumlee**

Curtis and Plumlee families were the most "button-blessed" people in town!

Such was the beginning of two stage-struck Du Quoin boys who were destined to develop a show business and a form of amusement which filled an important need in the lives of the people of their generation.

In school, in church, and on any occasion George and Billie were on hand to take their part in comedy, song, and dance. With the Neighbors' Opera House (upstairs over Jones' Drug Store) providing a pattern of professional talent and the tutelage of Mr. Will Keigly, who had enjoyed a considerable degree of success directing Du Quoin theatricals, the boys were launched on their chosen professional careers. By the age of 20 George had developed the negro type of comedy character which was to lead him to the bright lights of Broadway had he accepted the contract offered him. This announcement from the "Call" of February 25, 1904, reveals the following: "Pauline" or "An Eventful Day" will be presented at the Opera House under the auspices of the Endeavor Society of the Christian Church with the following cast—

Pauline, daughter of Cassady....Miss Isabel Davison.
Cullie, Servant maid.....Mrs. F. H. Long
Chickie, a spinster sister.....Mrs. H. O. Pope.
Naine, a village belle.....Miss Fay Williams.
Kiomi, an Indian fortune teller....Miss Minnie Croessmann.
Mother, a widow lady.....Mrs. L. B. Kelly.
Child, a small boy.....Layton Long.
Faber, a N. Y. journalist.....Karl D. Pope.
SHADY, FABER'S VALET....GEORGE CURTIS.
Cassady, landlord.....Robert Plumlee.
Professor,.....John T. Sweatt.
Sorrow, Borrow, and Morrow, spies....Prof. M. C. Murray, H. O. Pope, and E. R. Johnson.

It was in the role of the colored character that George excelled and which proved his outstanding speciality during those halcyon days when George and Billie were together. While at home in Du Quoin one spring he worked out the role of the colored parson. Searching the town for the proper regalia he called at the home of the Rev. J. Carroll Harriss and asked if he had an old coat with swallow-tails.

"Oh, I have one, George, but I don't believe you will want it. However, I'll get it for you." Whereupon the good minister went to a closet and drew forth an ancient black coat which had acquired a greenish tint in its dotage. With an enthusiastic shout, "Just what I wanted!" these vestments of the Clergy were bestowed upon him. With this outfit he developed a speciality act which proved an instantaneous hit. With his face blacked, George would come out on the stage in the guise of a colored parson with the Good Book in hand and used the audience as his congregation. On three occasions he declined a contract to present this skit in New York City because he did not wish to break up the theatrical organization he had perfected by that time.

A decided advancement was made in George Curtis' professional career and personal happiness when he met and married an attractive young lady of Thebes, Illinois. She, too, had yielded to the glamour of the footlights before her marriage and had enjoyed a brief theatrical career with the troupe of Captain Lightner's "Cotton Blossom" showboat. It will be remembered by the readers acquainted with Miss Edna Ferber's best-selling novel "Show Boat," that Captain Andy Hawks and his puritanical spouse, Parthenia Ann, were residents of the little town of Thebes on the Mississippi.

Mrs. Curtis became a regular member of the troupe with her husband and in participating in the "between-act" spcialties. When the Curtis'

**Lane Shankland**

daughters, Mabel and Sybil, were old enough, they, too, played bit parts and entered into the specialty work. As the girls grew older they became professional actresses and were cast in leading roles. It was a happy theatrical family.

While in Du Quoin Mrs. Curtis was willing to do her share in community enterprises as this announcement from the "Call" of Feb. 5, 1919, indicates: "Under the capable direction of Mrs. George Curtis, rehearsals for the staging of the mammoth musical cantata "The Brownies' Band" at the Majestic by pupils of the Ward and Wheatley schools are under way." Those in the opening chorus included: Mabel Curtis, Marjorie Stockton, Reola Dowell, Mabel Cross, Ruth Reid, Elizabeth Pugh, Helen Yemm, Virginia Neely, Elizabeth Adles, Rosalie Horn, Hazel Gray, Ruby Dunn, Martha Hutton, and Catherine Goddard.

Billie's precocious interest in the theater probably exceeded that of George since his professional activities were well established by the age of 16. On Friday, April 23, 1909, the "Call" states: "the Majestic Dramatic Company went to Christopher this morning where they will give a show this evening. The company is composed of Mr. and Mrs. George Curtis, Mr. and Mrs. Ezzel, Miss Cenie Yancey, Val Parker, Ormond Sweatt, Will Plumlee, and others." And again on May 1, 1909, we note that "William Plumlee, Jr., left last evening for Nevada, Mo., where he will join a theatrical company." A few years later appears the item: "William M. Plumlee, who has been spending ten days with his father, departed for Clinton, Oklahoma, to join the Uncle Zeke Company with which he has a season's engagement."

A few season's later found Billie with Crawford's Comedians, the show which was destined to come under the ownership of Billie Plumlee, George Curtis and, finally, their friend, Lane Shankland. At this time the Crawford show was playing chiefly in Missouri and Iowa towns. After the death of Crawford, Billie took over the management of the show and ultimately became its owner. With only a limited amount of capital and equipment, but possessed with a determination to succeed, Billie was able to fulfill his boyhood dream—that someday he would have a show of his own. Within the space of a few years he had expanded the show to include a troupe of accomplished actors and actresses, a splendid band and orchestra, a modern tent with the latest stage equipment, and a large railroad car which was used to transport the equipment.

During those years from the time the show became known as Billie Plumlee's Comedians to the time of his death in 1918 is the period when the two Du Quoin boys were together and enjoyed their happiest and most prosperous years. It is of this period the writer has his fondest recollections.

It must have been about 1915 when they came first to Metropolis, Illinois, down on the Ohio. Located near the old market in the center of the town the large tent was jammed every night for a week. The next summer they returned and stayed two weeks, presenting a different play each night. At this time Billie was the comedian and the person around whom all the plays revolved. George Curtis and his wife did specialties between acts and acted in some of the plays. Lane Shankland was playing the lead opposite an attractive and talented actress named Bertha Natino. Ingenue roles were played by Mrs. Shankland.

# Chapter 5

AS in all tent show troupes, the members of the play cast doubled in the band and orchestra or assisted in seating the crowd. Usually a band concert was given in the center of the business district during the afternoon and repeated before the tent at the time of the opening for the evening's performance. They were next seen when them came out from back stage, some with the make-up of character roles on their faces, to sit in an improvised orchestra pit to play the overture.

This completed, those musicians who were obliged to appear in the opening scene of the play, hurried back stage to be in position when the curtain was raised. This was the magic moment! With the "house" lights turned off and the tent in darkness except for the brightly lighted stage, a hushed stillness fell over the assembled crowd, among the "quality" folk who sat in the reserved seat section and "ordinary" people who had perched themselves on the roosts on the sides and rear.

For an hour and a half the audience sat enthralled and gave their attention with childlike faith to the land of make-believe. Vicariously the audience lived the play. Spontaneous bursts of laughter were followed by moments of strained silence when sorrow and pathos stalked the stage. On these occasions, if the act ended and the house lights were turned on suddenly, one had no difficulty in observing tears in the eyes of nearby patrons and in hearing a blowing of noses in a variety of keys.

It was then that Billie came out in front of the drawn curtain to announce the play for the next night. Dressed in the garb of the rustic rube or "hayseed" with red wig, freckles. blacked-out front teeth, and oversized pants held up by one "gallus," he proceeded with a shy and hesitant manner to say something like this:

"You know, folks, we're in an awful mess up here! Mary's Pa is dead, the folks are about to lose the farm to that derned rascal, Dick Slade, but, shucks, don't worry. We're going back in a few minutes and fix up every derned little thing and make it all come out all right. Now folks, tomorrer night we are going to present . . . "

Such was more than an announcement—it was entertainment in itself and no other speciality between that act need be offered. His "shucks," "derns" and "gee-whizzes" were taken up by the

imitative young folk and remained in use long after the show left town.

The crowds continued night after night. The tent show made no particular social class appeal. All classes and levels of small town society attended and were as one in enjoyment and appreciation. Families of saw mill operators, prosperous business men, doctors, lawyers, railroad men, saw mill workers, shantyboat people from the bayous around Massac Creek, mussel fishermen from Brick Bat Ridge, farmers, and artisans, all, came and forgot their troubles. Tired and work-worn women, their physical strength sapped from too frequent child bearing and their minds burdened with the cares of motherhood, on a limited income, carried away on their faces expressions of happiness and relief.

The people of Metropolis took the troupe of the Plumlee show into their hearts and homes. For many seasons they returned and were welcomed into the homes of the best people. The old attitude that "show people" were trashy and steeped in sin did not apply and the highest respect was shown the persons connected with the show. This faith was never betrayed and under the management of Plumlee, Curtis, and Shankland the highest moral standards were maintained.

The troupe played here in Du Quoin the week of July 10, 1916, and located their tent on the corner of Hickory and Franklin streets. During the week the Plumlee show team defeated the Du Quoin baseball team 9 to 5. The next year the show returned and showed on Spring street in front of the John B. Ward school.

The tent was stored in the wintertime and performances continued in the theaters and small town opera houses. What was to prove the last appearance of Billie in his home town received this notice in the "Call:"

"Monday, October 7, 1918, will witness the annual opening of the Majestic Theatre, Du Quoin's popular play house.

"The initial attraction will be Billie Plumlee and his troupe of comedians and dramatists. A more fitting performance to share in the theatrical season in Du Quoin than that provided by this popular boy would be hard to find . . . "

After showing here three nights, Billie and his troupe went to Missouri and played in a number of towns. At Ash Grove, Missouri, the home of his wife, Billie suffered an attack of Spanish influenza which was raging all over the country. Partially recovered he got out too soon to play in the band celebrating the signing of the Armistice and suffered a backset which led to pneumonia and his death. Funeral services were conducted at the I. O. O. F. cemetery by Rev. C. W. Culp. In fitting tribute to one whose life had been associated with band work, the Du Quoin Military Band escorted the remains from the Plumlee home on North Division street to the cemetery.

After Billie's death, Guy Long took over the show and managed it during the summer season. The show went to Texas for the winter and closed in Humboldt. Here George Curtis and Lane Shankland continued showing in theaters throughout the state. They bought a tent and equipment and decided to start out on their own in the spring. Before the troupe disbanded in February and scattered from New York to Arizona, the majority decided to leave Guy Long and to join with Curtis and Shankland. These men returned to Du Quoin to complete their preparations and to conduct rehearsals for the opening. In April they started out and had their first showing in Ripley, Tennessee. Such was the beginning of a combination which was to prove a successful financial venture.

During these days, the tent show attempted to play during the fair weeks of Southern Illinois towns. This was before the day of night performances and people who had witnessed the races and activities of the afternoons, flocked to the tent show at night for relaxation and entertainment. At the Anna and Pinckneyville fairs their net profit for the week amounted to more than $1000. At Mt. Vernon one year, the troupe netted $2600 which was deposited in a Du Quoin bank. The itinerary of the tent show included towns in Missouri, Indiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee as well as Southern Illinois.

Now George took over the comedy roles in all the plays and continued the same type of comedy which had been so successfully developed by Billie. Lane Shankland continued the role of the handsome hero while his wife and Mrs. Curtis alternated in the feminine leads.

The plays needed during a season usually numbered seven or eight. A Saturday afternoon might include "Little Orphan Annie" and sometimes the town would permit a showing on Sunday night. Naturally over a period of years this theatrical organization acquired a considerable number and variety of types of plays. George told his father at one time that he had enough plays to last five years if they never obtained another. It was to be expected also that out of this extensive repertoire of plays would appear one which proved a "natural" and would be in demand year after year. Their outstanding presentation and time-favored production was entitled "Saintly Hypocrites and Honest Sinners." It was written by an old time trouper by the name of Harrison of Denver, Colorado, who received a royalty of $150 a season for its showing.

The play itself appeared to be a combination

of plots as suggested by Harold Bell Wright's "Shepherd of the Hills" and "The Calling of Dan Matthews." The theme was religious and concerned the brow-beaten existence of a minister, the smug hypocrisy of his congregation and their attitude toward the unfortunate and fallen. In this production George dropped the usual comedy role and played the part of a simple-minded and naive small town boy. The town drunkard had died and the Deacons had refused to allow their minister to preach Old Joe's funeral. In the most dramatic scene in the play George, playing the part of Abe Stubbs, comes to the minister's study and attempts to persuade him to preach the funeral. The scene proves to be a masterpiece of acting for George and is pregnant with pathos and deep emotion. The women in the audience were moved to tears. Mr. Shankland reports that this production was demanded by their patrons years after it was originally played. Its fine moral lessons were acceptable to the clergy and on numerous occasions they requested that it be presented on Sunday. Presentation of the play in Martin, Tennessee, one year almost brought on a riot and necessitated considerable explanation. By mere coincidence a "shake-up" was in progress in one of the Martin churches and the principal characters in the play were the exact prototypes of the persons causing the trouble in the church. The audience protested that their unfortunate condition was being held up for ridicule by the show. Profuse explanations were necessary to convince the natives it was only coincidence. Motion picture rights for this play have been sold and it will be produced soon under a different title.

Other favorites by the same author were entitled "The Only Road" and "Jim Bailey." The highest royalty play was "The Gorilla" on which was a season royalty charge of $500. Other titles included: The Awakening, Small Town Girl, The Travelling Salesman, Shepherd of the Hills, Champagne and Buttermilk, Nine O'Clock Town, When a Woman Marries, My Friend from Arkansas, Kentucky Sun, Clouds and Sunshine, Love and Labor, The Burglar Who Came to Stay, When Dreams Come True, The Faith of Mary Ann, Road to Happiness, A Real Lady, Going Straight, Little Lost Sister, Shooting Gold, and Just Plain Folks.

These plays were directed by Mr. Norman U. Gray who also played the "heavy" roles during the years under Plumlee and Curtis and Shankland.

A few years of happiness in the show business with Mr. Shankland came to an end when sudden death came to George at Centralia. He had gone into the jewelry store of a friend and picked up a glass and filled it at the water cooler. After drinking its contents the clerk recalled that the glass had held the deadly potassium cyanide, used by jewelers to clean silver But it was too late and death came within twenty minutes.

Thus ended the career of two Du Quoin boys whose lives had paralleled throughout. Born near each other in Sunfield, both as boys became "stage struck," both became drummers in the band and orchestra, both became outstanding comedians, both died suddenly, and both lie near each other at the I. O. O. F. cemetery in Du Quoin.

This article has been written as a memorial to these two men who did two significant things in their profession:

They provided a form of amusement that was clean and wholesome for thousands of people in Southern Ilinois and surrounding territory and secondly, they did much to make the stage honorable and decent and to elevate theatrical folk in the eyes of the people. Du Quoin may be proud of George Curtis and Billie Plumlee!

# The "Princess" Theatre

## *Chapter 6*

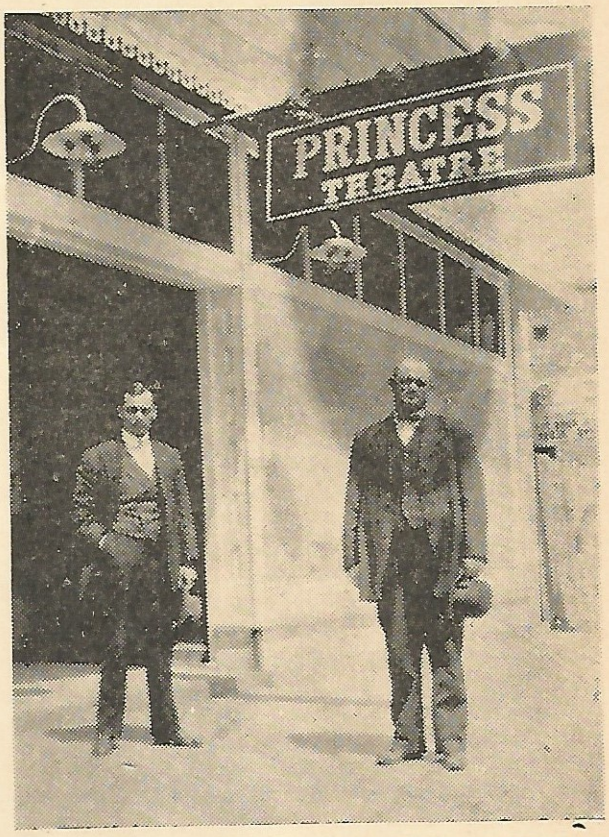
IT appears that Du Quoin citizens viewed the first faint flicker of that form of entertainment destined to revolutionize the entertainment world sometime around 1900. The first movies were shown in a tent thrown up in the dust of Division street between where now is located the Du Quoin State Bank and the Metropolitan Barber Shop. The tent flouted a huge sign suggesting the unknown and unusual 'Electric Theatre"—"Where You Will See the Latest Life Size Moving Pictures." Win Erwin, off to a good start on a business in which he was to devote many happy and loyal years, was the ticket collector. The picture shown was "The Great Train Robbery" and it proved a thriller from start to finish. The man who cranked the projector located on a box in the rear of the tent, explained the scenes and prepared the crowd for the action of the picture. There were no titles the film being an unbroken strip of thrills strongly suggestive of having been taken in a downpour of heavy rain. In one part of this picture a locomotive was shown approaching head-on. As it raced closer and closer and filled the sheet, people in the front rows of benches shrieked and ducked low to escape the onrushing monster. Thereafter, the man with the show was obliged to warn that there was no danger and that one need not fear a locomotive being spilled in his lap.

On October 16, 1900, Neighbor's Opera House advertised "Edison's Great Kinetoscope and Concert Company." "New" moving pictures were shown and illustrated songs were sung by Mr. Frank E. Ritter, the eminent baritone, direct from Proctor's Theatre in New York City. The people were urged to see especially, the Jeffries and Sharkey fight.

Despite its impressive name, the "Kinetoscope" was actually a palpitating and jumpy invention. On a white sheet, and sometimes not too clean, the figures scampered about. From the projection machine issued forth the sputterings and hissings of the carbons and the decidedly noticeable cranking and whirring of squeaky sprokets. At the moment of greatest suspense the screen was wont to go suddenly blank. Then everyone turned around to see if the operator was doing anything about it. After hasty mending and pasting, the lights were turned off, the grinding of the crank resumed and once more the spectators settled down to enjoyment.

The pictures were hard on the eyes with the constant flicker and the showers of dancing spots over everything. The chairs were ordinary folding chairs arranged in rows without benefit of elevation or incline and sometimes necessitated some stretching of the neck to see the whole screen. Although all these things appear as crudities now, there was something wonderful about it all. Here were pictures of real people who moved about with a quick, stiff-legged gait, who doffed hats with lightning alacrity, who chased each other and fell but bounced up again as if striking rubber earth. It was all very strange and, at times, unreal, but it was fascinating entertainment and the Du Quoin people liked it. After this preliminary sampling of the new medium the people of Du Quoin were ready for the establishment of a full-time movie house.

It was at this time and in the year 1907 that two young Hoosiers arrived from Brazil, Indiana. As miners back in Indiana Thomas A. Reid and



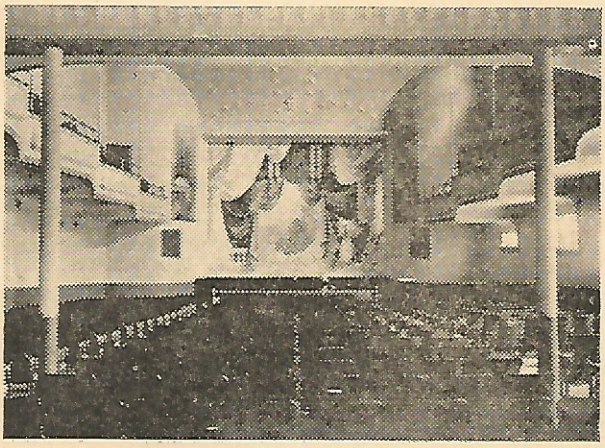

Rex and Hill, proprietors of the Princess Theatre which ocupied a building on South Mulberry street, originally a skating rink and now the home of Stotlar Motors.

Theodore E. Yemm had saved enough money to attempt investment in the moving picture business. After loking over several prospective locations in Southern Illinois towns, the young men decided upon Du Quoin. The Neighbor's Opera House (over Jones' Drug Store) was leased. With the old opera house partially arranged for the new medium of entertainment, the "Electric Theatre," as it was originally advertised, was opened and ready for business. From the beginning this partnership proved a success, but as in any business, hard work and determination were necessary. Mr. Yemm cranked the machine and Mr. Reid provided the advertising and some of the entertainment. In the early years it was a family affair and the members of the family assisted in the enterprise.

Before the opening of the show a large megaphone was thrust out of one of the windows facing Main Street and young L. E. "Butter" Pyle, now the estimable Chief of Police, proceeded to play six or eight stock records on phonograph. These selections included "Under the Double Eagle," "Thunderer March," "In My Merry Oldsmobile," and a parody on the song "Cheyenne." These were turned off only to allow Mr. Reid to shout "The Electric is now open," "the big show is now starting," or similar words of encouragement to a prospect who might be passing below on Main Street. Many Du Quoin people pleasantly recall this ballyhoo preceding the show.

Admission to the "Lyric," as the theatre was soon named, was only 5 and 10 cents. Tickets were sold by family members and by the versitile Pyle over a period of two years. Cenie Yancey, now Mrs. Sam Hurt, sang the illustrated songs. These were glass slides in color thrown on the screen to illustrate the particular selection. Possessed with a clear and beautiful voice, Miss Yancy sang such songs as "Clover Blossom," "Star Light," "Letter Edged in Black," "Down by he Old Mill Stream," and "Melody Lane." Mr. Reid, who also had a fine voice, sang many of the illustrated songs. A number of Du Quoin persons accompanied the singers at different times at the piano. Those who played for Miss Yancey included Artie Holden, Inez Gunster, Archie Lehn, Bertha Carr, and Earl Carr.

During these early days the stairway at the Lyric was at the back. A gallery extended across the rear, but in 1911, the enterprising managers added two side balconies which had a seating capacity of 180 persons. Some of the back seats of the first floor were elevated and about 300 opera chairs replaced the old ones down stairs. Another machine was added to the projection booth, thus enabling the operator to give a continuous show without being obliged to stop to change reels. No longer was it necessary for Mr. Yemm to state, "Just One Moment Please," as he placed a new reel on the machine. No longer were the Du Quoin spectators obliged to wait those minutes to see whether the villian choked the hero to death. But they were patient. One Du Quoin youth demonstrated this patience and cooperation. Seated beside his mother with his eyes glued to the screen the reel came to an abrupt close and Mr. Yemm gave his familiar "Just one moment please" to which the interested and fascinated youngster replied so that all could hear him, "All right!" A new use of lemon squeezers was made by Reid and Yemm. Across the front of the theatre clear glass lemon squeezers were placed over electric light bulbs in the form of the letters "LYRIC."



The elaborate curtain and the paintings that flanked the stage of the early Grand were probably never serious competition for the Louvre or even the Chicago Institute of Fine Arts, but many a heart beat faster as this gateway to rairyland was rolled up to start the evening's entertainment. This is a view of the Grand, looking toward the stage as it appeared when first built. The two large posts in the foreground will be well remembered by many a person who suffered from a stiff neck trying to keep up with fast action on the stage which always seemed to be happening directly behind the posts.

Competition soon entered the moving picture business in Du Quoin. A second theatre called "The Theatorium" was established in the Ward building at 21 South Division St. where the Du Quoin Electric Laundry is now located. The same type of program was presented here. In 1907 the biggest picture of the entire year was shared by the two theatres. A full-page ad in the "Call" calls attention to "The Passion Play—A Touching Drama in the Life of Christ." "It re-

quires four reels of film to reproduce the play!" This four-reel super production was divided between the Theatorium and the Electric theatre, the first two reels being shown at the Theatorium, then hurried over to the Electric, while the Theatorium finished the showing.

In February, 1908, the advertising of the Theatorium included "The Ship Owner's Daughter" and the illustrated song, "All My Love for You." Mr. Nick Stein, Moses Straughan, Mrs. Shalon Anderson, and Miss Mattie Roy won attendance prizes. The biggest show ever given for 5 cents included four pictures, "Comrade Rations," "Lost Mine," and "An Error of Justice." A new feature was introduced in throwing the picture of any person on the screen free of charge.

Note these titles: "Soldier's Dream," "The Mishaps of a Baby Carriage," "A Very Good Husband," "Mother-in-Law's Visit to the Windy City" and the illustrated songs, "'Neath the Boughs of the Old Maple Tree," and "Pal of Mine."

On December 7, Manager Dickens announced the closing of the Theatorium. On January 22, 1909, George Stafford and William Ballard turned the building into the more prosiac work of upholstering and furniture repairing.

The Star Theatre was established early by Fritz and Edison in Davison building on Main Street now occupied by the Egyptian Cigar Store. Here in August, Mr. George Fritz guaranteed to keep his audience cool while they witnessed a clean up-to-date show. Tickets sold for 5 cents and a bag of peanuts was given with each ticket. At one time a glass of lemonade was given. Sound effects were first used behind the screen in Du Quoin at the Star. Crude sound effects such as the shaking of tin and the dropping of boards were utilized. By May 25, 1909, J. H. Martin, who had acquired the theatre, sold the equipment to Mrs. Dora Reinhart of St. Louis. She, in turn, leased the Star to W. R. Sheppard of Carterville and the show soon passed out of existence.

Another early competitor of the Lyric was the Princess Theatre located on South Mulberry street in the building formerly occupied by the Kohl and Meyer Grocery Company. The Stotlar Garage is in the present location. Both vaudeville and pictures were presented here, but, like the others, the theatre was soon abandned.

The Du Quoin Theatre was opened in 1923 by Kunz and Thimmig on North Division Street where the Du Quoin Auto Supply is now located. Excellent programs were offered here since the motion picture productions had become well developed by that time. The name was later changed to the Midway and by 1928 only a few showings were given, and, by the next year, the theatre front was torn away and the building remodeled for store use.

On the West Side the Pershing Theatre was opened in 1919 and had a run of good pictures including some vaudeville. Charlie Chaplin, Pearl White and Antonio Moreno headed the list until October 5, 1929, when the Pershing changed its name to the State and prepared for the showing of talking pictures. At the formal opening Isabel O'Keefe and her "Robbers of Sorrow" provided the music.

Du Quoin had its share of airdomes with the Joy located on the corner of Oak and Main where the Kroger Piggly-Wiggly Store now operates and one located where the Grand Theatre now stands. These were owned and operated by Reid and Yemm. Mike Dooley operated an airdome on the location of the Croessmann Wholesale Company on the West Side for a time.

# Chapter 7

THE plots of the earliest motion pictures were flimsy affairs. Each picture, usually one or two reels, was a complete story in itself necessitating a hurry-up action of everything concerned. Hasty flirtations, brief courtships, and the march was made to the altar. There was much fighting chasing by cops with handlebar mustaches, the burning of shacks, and a brief joy ride up the river to Sing Sing.

Unlike the big name attractions of today the early films made no mention of the leading character or any member of the cast. Reference was made instead to the number of reels and the "stupendous" number of feet of film. Here is a typical billing in 1909:

THE RAGPICKER'S DAUGHTER
IN THE LAND OF KOREA
DAMON AND PYTHIAS
OVER 4000 FEET OF MOVING PICTURES

That was all there was.

Other billings included the addition of two illustrated songs with the films. These included, during one week in 1909, "My Little Yiddish Queen," "When the Frost is on the Flowers," "I've Been Longing a Long Time for You," "You're Just the Boy for Me," "I'm Awfully Strong for You," and "I'm Mourning for the Loss of Chloe."

Positively no mention was made of the players or the producers in "The Chauffeur's Day Off," "The Slave Catchers of Florida," "Trying to Get Arrested," "The Interrupted Joy Ride," "The Other Fellow," or any of the list of four or five pictures promised for each showing.

The first attempts at distinguishing between the kinds of pictures was devoted to the calling of attention to the producers. These included names meteorically prominent, but now long forgotten. These were Biograph, Vitagraph, Essanay, and Lubin. In 1910 the Lyric advertised "In Life's Cycle," and "The Men Haters' Club" as Biograph films while "How She Won Him" and "The Wrong Box" were produced by Vitagraph.

By 1911 the Lyric had begun to dress up its advertising with a statement concerning each picture as shown in this typical billing of one performance:

AN OLD SWEETHEART OF MINE
From a Poem by James Whitcomb Riley.
A beautiful poem made more beautiful on the screen.

A RUN ON THE BANK
A Comedy
Showing how a run on the bank was stopped by the use of a ferocious lion.

THE TRAIL OF A BOOK
A Beautiful Biograph Drama.

DANIEL BOONE'S BRAVERY
An Indian Drama with Many Thrills in It.

It was in 1912 when the names of the stars began to appear. The first star known to Du Quoin movie goers was Maurice Costello, whom the fans called by the more familiar "Jack." The first of the leading women stars possessed the euphonious name of Florence Laurence. "Jack" Costello was the first of the matinee idols to draw sighs from the women, especially in his picture "The Picture Idol" appearing at the Lyric in 1912. This early group included Helen Gardner, Ann Schaeffer, Lillian Walker, Flora Finch, and a pudgy-faced little comedian named John Bunny. About this time some wit introduced the screaming possibilities of the custard pie and John Bunny and other comedians began to take nourishment through the pores of their faces.

Bunny, whose antics as a slap-stick comedian in these early comedies made millions laugh, died in Brooklyn, April 27, 1915. At the time of his death he was regarded as the country's leading comedian and was the highest salaried actor in the business. The "Call" states that he was said to have received more than the President of the United States' measly $75,000 per annum and Bunny's income was to prove pin money when compared to Mae West's $400,000 years later when the people stood in line at the box office to hear Mae's double-meaning innuendos and "Come up and see me, sometime."

The Majestic Opera House had entered the moving picture business sometime around 1911. At any rate on May 3, 1911 the "Call" states:

"This morning a deal was made whereby the management of the Majestic Theatre retire from the moving picture business and lease the theatre to Messrs. Reid and Yemm of the Lyric for Saturday nights only. The Majestic management will devote time to securing the best road shows."

This policy continued for some years and on February 11, 1916, Reid and Yemm purchased an interest in the Majestic from W. R. Hayes and the new firm conducted the Majestic until it was abandoned a number of years later.

It was a gala occasion on February 24, 1914, when the new Grand Theatre, built by Reid and Yemm, on the corner of Main and Washington, was opened. A large crowd attended the opening performance provided by the Chenney Concert Company and four reels of feature pictures. The new structure was advertised as being modern in every design, costing more than $17,000.

It boasted a large re-inforced concrete projection booth which was fireproofed throughout. For a time vaudeville and three reels of motion pictures were shown at the following prices: First floor 30 cents, balcony 20 cents, children 10 cents.

At the Grand in 1914 the Keystone comedies began to appear. These were directed by a man with the perfect low-comedy touch. If any man could convulse his audience with laughter, it was Mack Sennett. His Keystone pictures knew no restraint. Common scenes included the rolling up of a taxicab from which fifty beetle-browed policemen emerged, chases through the mayor's office, his wife's bedroom, or the politician's love nest. After spinning several hundred feet of film in a single chase, the panting characters ended up in a neighborhood pond before the final fade out.

Among his Keystone "greats" in those days were Gloria Swanson, Charlie Chaplin, Louise Fazenda, Fatty Arbuckle, and Mabel Normand.

Then the serials with those terrible Saturday night endings began to appear. These bore the titles of "The Perils of Pauline" and "The Iron Claw," featuring Pearl White, Sheldon Lewis, and a smiling young actor with a dimpled chin named Creighton Hale. Lewis was the villian of the series, and, with his pock-marked face and iron claw around the throat of his victim, many a youthful spine was made to shiver. There was much chasing around in 1914 Maxwells through the film until the end when Pearl and Creighton were presumably blown into little pieces by a dynamite charge. With a rattle and a bang from the projection booth came the final flash— "Continued Next Week." Only the promise of another episode gave consolation to the youthful enthusiasts that you can't go on with the hero and the heroine killed off every Saturday night.

A near panic was averted when the last chapter of "The Iron Claw" fell off the express truck on Main Street. A search was made in vain and Reid and Yemm ordered another from St. Louis. By the time the new film arived a call was sent in by a colored citizen who had found the film and desired a reward.

Other thrillers included "The Clutching Hand," "Trey of Hearts," "Million Dollar Mystery," "The Beloved Adventure," with Arthur V. Johnson and Lottie Briscoe, "The Black Box," "The Exploits of Elaine," "Neal of the Narry," and Francis Ford and Grace Cunard in "The Broken Coin." Ruth Roland appeared in a railroad breath-taker and piled up a fortune from dropping from bridges to a moving train in her pictures and investing her money in Hollywood real estate.

In 1915 the longer feature films of five reels began to appear. The quickly developed plots of the early two-reelers with all their faults were overcome in the longer films. Plot and characterization became more life-like and a decided improvement in the quality of films became evident.

The spectacular picture of 1915, shown at the Majestic, was "Cabiria" with "1200 supreme scenes, 5000 imposing cast as seen in 200 B. C." Other five-reel films included "Brewster's Millions," "Quo Vadis," Mary Pickford in "Caprice," Anita Stewart in "A Million Bid," Francis X. Bushman in "One Wonderful Night," Evelyn Nesbit Thaw in "Threads of Destiny," "The Ten Commandments," and "The Spoilers." Note this descriptive ad writing for "The Spoilers":

"The barehanded fight of two hate-maddened men, both physical giants, alone in a small frame building—a fight that raged almost an hour, up and down the lawyer's office, that demolished the bookcases and chairs, that tore the shirts of the two men."

The picture "Ramona" by Helen Hunt Jackson with its 1000 scenes and 5000 people made a big hit at the Majestic. He-man pictures began to appear. When William Farnum in "The Heart of a Lion" pulled off his coat and rolled up his belligerent sleeves, all the barometes within four blocks of Main Street indicated an impending storm.

Du Quoin movie goers could take their pick on the night of January 30, 1915, with the Grand, Majetsic and the Lyric in operation. The Lyric was showing Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" at 5 and 10 cents.

The citizens of Du Quoin had their fling at home talent movies in 1916. The picture was entitled "Du Quoin adopts a Baby." All scenes were filmed here in the city. The cast included Miss Helen Hamilton, Ralph Eddleman, Miss Beatrice Burch, Louis R. Kelly, W. A. Erwin, and a large number of Du Quoin people including merchants and other business men.

The story hinged on the adoption by Mr. and Mrs. Henpeck (Ralph Eddleman and Miss Hamilton) of the "baby" (Beatrice Burch). The elaborate preparations for the reception of the baby and the final discovery of its identity were extremely mirth provoking. One of the most realistic scenes of the picture was the one of the local station in which passenger train No. 5 was caught by the camera coming into town, bearing the "baby." The picture was clear and distinct. The feature was scheduled to play only one night but, because of the large crowd unable to obtain entrance to the Majestic, the show was repeated the second night.

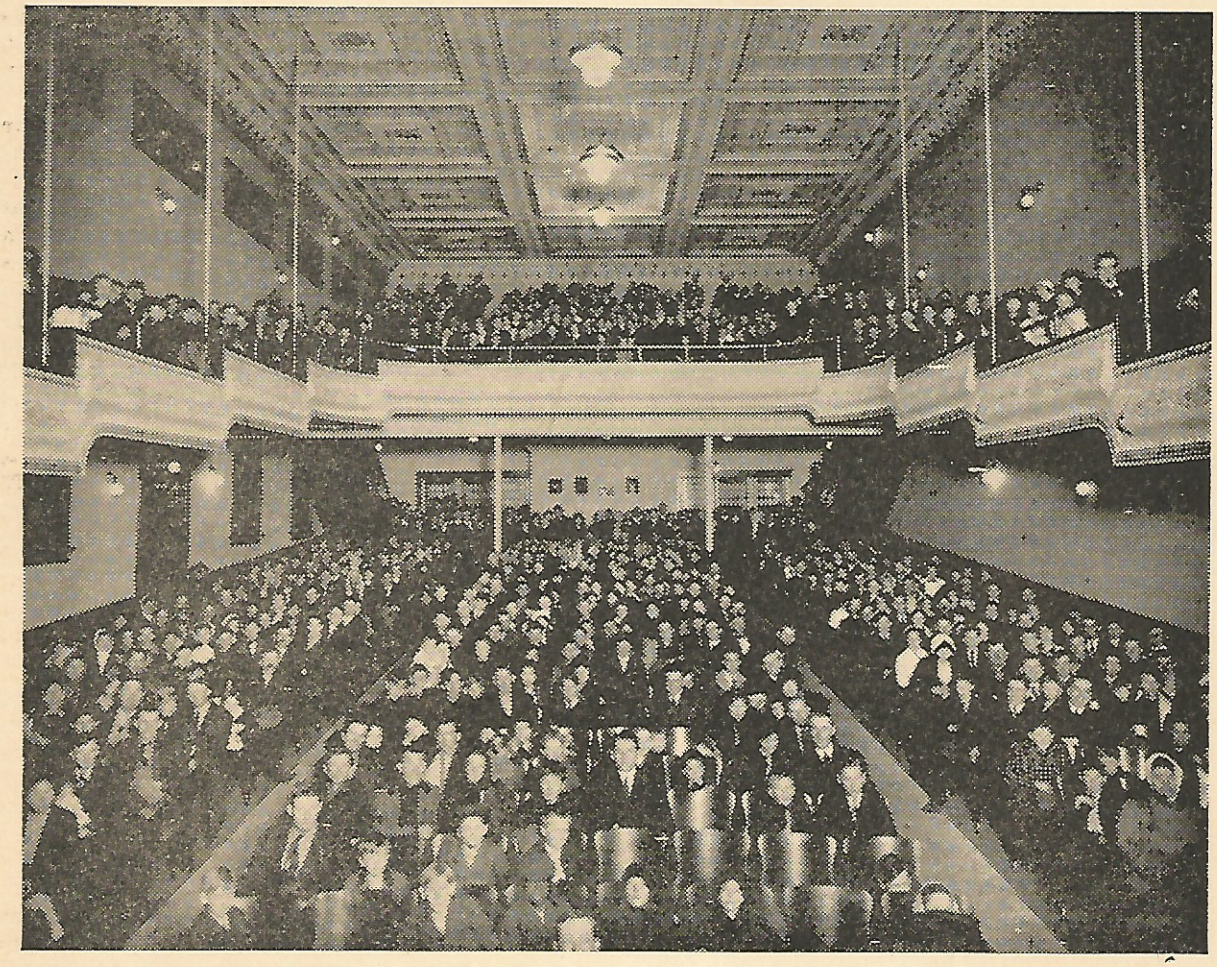
The years 1916 and 1917 brought many new characters to charm the local audiences. These

included Nance O'Neill, Norma Talmadge, Enid Markey, Billie Burke, Richard Bennett, Mary Miles Minter, Lillian Gish, Owen Moore, June Caprice, Mrs. Vernon Castle, Clara Kimball Young, Gladys Hulette, Stuart Holmes, Dorothy Gish, and Valeska Suratt.

The movie siren of these years was the dark-eyed Theda Bara. Appearing as "The Tiger Woman" and as "The Vampire," Miss Bara acquired the reputation of a heartless winner of men's souls. William S. Hart and Douglas Fairbanks carried the blood and thunder roles, Hart in the Westerns and Fairbanks in the fantastic type. Bill did his emoting behind a pair of six shooters while Doug was at his best when swinging from a chandelier, he succeeded in overcoming 15 ordinary men.

Advertised in 1918 as the most elaborate historical portrayal Reid and Yemm ever brought to Du Quoin was Theda Bara in the role of Cleopatra in "The Siren of the Nile." The representative of the company in charge of the film took occasion to give special praise to the Majestic Theatre Orchestra whose incidental music contributed to the success of the show. The orchestra included W. A. Erwin, cornet; Charles Rogers, Jr., violin; Frank Geiger, flute; C. A. Holden, piano; and Herbert Hampton, drums.

A big war picture of 1918 was entitled "The Kaiser, The Beast of Berlin." A full page ad shows a picture of the Kaiser with his fingers around a woman's throat. "All choked by the throttling clutches of this mad demon . . . this world renowned murderer . . . this cruel beast



C. A. (Artie) Holden peeks over the top of his piano in the immediate foreground. The boy with the cap and ear muffs prepared for the Arctic is Harold Pugh. Others identified are Ruth Reid, Helen Yemm, John Purtill, Edward Cook and Virginia Neely. Mr. Reid is standing in the rear, left aisle. Note the head-gear worn by the ladies; the projection booth the balcony extending down each side. It was a fine theatre in its day but a long way from what we have later become so used to.

who leers at life . . . who despises everyone and everything that is not German . . . See what this vile fiend does in that indescribable photoplay."

In 1919 Reid, Yemm and Hayes began to extend their theatre operations which were to lead them to the ownership of a chain of theatres in nine cities when they finally sold out to the Fox interests for approximately $1,500,000. Purchase was made of the Christopher Opera House, the Globe Theatre of Christopher, the Sesser Opera House and the Rex Theatre in West Frankfort in 1919. It was this year that one of the most dynamic and likeable comediennes of the movies made her first big hit—Mabel Normand in "Mickey." A song by the same name was released with this film and singers were sent all over the country. Evelyn Harris of Chicago sang "Mickey, pretty Mickey, with your eyes o fazure blue . . . " at the Grand. Other notable productions included William S. Hart in "The Cold Deck," Mary Pickford in "How Could You, Jean," Geraldine Farrar, borrowed from Grand Opera, in "Shadows," Nazimova, the talented Russian with the Bernhardt touch, in "Out of the Fog," and William Russell, one of the western favorites, in "Where the West Begins."

Miss Jennie Burch, Du Quoin girl who was to attain a high place in music circles in the United States, sang "Out Where the West Begins," accompanying the picture. Charles Chaplin continued his previous successes in appearing in "A Dog's Life." By this time he had become recognized as America's No. 1 funny man. Movie struck kids all over the nation attempted to emulate his ludicrous mannerisms.

It was not until 1920 that Will Rogers, so well known among movie fans, began to appear in motion pictures. An ad in the "Call" claimed him as "the champion lariat thrower of the world, the homliest and the funniest man in motion pictures, in "Almost a Husband."

This gum-chewing and philosophical lariat thrower had made a hit in a current issue of the Zeigfeld Follies and the silver screen had beckoned as it had to many others. His picture "Jubilo" came the same year. It was not until the appearance of the talkies, however, that Will Rogers was to attain his greatest heights. Tom Mix in "The Daredevil," William Russell in "Six Feet Four," and Harry Carey in "Overland Red," provided the Western thrills in 1920. Bert Lytell, also borrowed from the stage, gave Du Quoin audiences their first successful gangster picture in O Henry's famous "Alias Jimmy Valentine."

Beautiful actresses of the period included Blanche Sweet, Katherine McDonald (the American Beauty), Mary Miles Minter, Viola Dana, Norma and Constance Talmadge, Priscilla Dean, and Gladys Brockwell.

After a period of intensive redecoration the "new" Grand Theatre was opened with an elaborate showing December 12, 1921. Starring Richard Dix and Helen Chadwick in "Dangerous Curves Ahead" the theatre was opened to a packed house. Decorated with flowers, the theatre was truly a bower of beauty. An eleven piece orchestra took the house by storm in their playing of the overture from the "Velvet Lady." The orchestra included the following: Pianist, C. Arthur Holden; violins, Charles Rogers, Jr., Ormond J. Sweatt and Mrs. Claude Benedict; clarinet, Don Tripody; flute, Frank Geiger; cornets, W. A. Erwin and T. E. Crawford; saxophone, E. B. Richarts; bass violin, Thomas Jones; drums, H. Omar Parker.

# Chapter 8

THE year 1921 saw the rise of a young actor named Charles Ray. Appearing at the Grand with Clara Horton in "Nineteen and Phyllis" and "The Ole Swimmin' Hole," Charles Ray impressed his audiences with his boyish charm. Cast in the role of the country boy who outwitted the city slickers, Ray was particularly successful. Worth a million and receiving $4000 a week he built a studio in Hollywood only to fail. The talking pictures gave him only occasional roles and last August, 1941, he was obliged to file a petition in bankruptcy.

A Carbondale girl, Agnes Ayres, granddaughter of Major W. P. Slack, postmaster of Carbondale, began to appear in pictures. Notables of 1921 included Mae Murray, Dorothy Dalton, Douglas MacLean, Olive Thomas, Ethel Clayton, Anna Q. Nilsson, Elsie Ferguson, Alma Rubens, Alice Brady, Carmel Meyers, Dustin Farnum and Pauline Starke.

Rudolph Valentino, the matinee idol of all time, made his dashing appearance before Du Quoin audiences at the Grand in 1922. Appearing with Agnes Ayers in "The Shiek," a torrid picture of love and passion on the desert, Valentino leaped into fame here as well as all over the nation. His following picture "Blood and Sand," with Lila Lee and Nita Naldi elevated his name to meteoric heights. In this picture Valentino was a Spanish bullfighter. As a combination of George Raft and Tyrone Power in appearance, Valentino's sleek black hair, side burns, toreador costume with sash and belled-bottom trousers inaugurated a definite trend in the dress of young men in Du Quoin as well as everywhere else. The men's stores began to display suits with tight fitting waists and pants with the material made tight at the knee, but flaring at the cuff in bell shape. Some dress radicals even slit a side of each leg and inserted bright red cloth to make them more noticeable. Sometimes a sash was worn! The following year when the writer was graduated from high school everyone of the fourteen boys in the graduating class of 1923 from the Metropolis High School wore new suits with bell bottom pants ordered through a tailor of the town!

A youngster who won his way into the hearts of Du Quoin people during the early twenties was Jackie Coogan. With his dilapidated cap pulled over one ear and his innocent and attractive dark eyes peering plaintively from the flop-py cap bill, Jackie succeeded in becoming the first child star. He appeared here in "My Boy," "Oliver Twist," and "Circus Days." Baby Marie Osbourne, Jane and Katherine Lee, and others received prominence.

Vaudeville augmented the theatre programs during the twenties. In quality and type of act the vaudeville acts were varied indeed. Ranging from B. D. Madsen, "the tallest man in the world," to the last of the original Tom Thumb midgets appearing with "Tinymite," the world's smallest perfectly formed horse, variety in size was obtained. Travelling road shows, song and dance teams, Hawaiian string bands and phonograph record notables appeared at the movie houses. Over a period of years, however, the Majestic concentrated on the road shows and offered movies only on special occasions. The appearance of the Brown Saxophone Six, Victor and Columbia record artists, left an epidemic of amateur saxophone tooting in their wake. Orchestras like Frank Trumbauer's and Ruth Stonehouse's were well received.

In selecting movie favorites it is a well known fact that men and women fans seldom agree on the same actor. During the twenties, however, they invariably agreed upon three outstanding stars. These were Wallace Reid, Thomas Meighan and Milton Sills. Although Reid was strikingly handsome in a frail sort of way, his earnestness and sincerity kept him out of the "pretty boy" classification. Thomas Meighan and Milton Sills were the robust, outdoor type who appealed to both sexes. John Barrymore and John Gilbert were too handsome for comfort so far as the men were concerned. The elderly Theodore Roberts was the grand old man of the screen and with his role in "Grumpy" won him thousands of friends. Wallace Reid, overworked in the movie studios, had allowed himself to become a narcotic addict and died in attempting a cure. His wife later made a film exposing the evils of the drug habit in "Human Wreckage." Du Quoin audiences filled the theatre to witness this great film of exposure.

The year 1924 brought one of the greatest character actors in the history of the American movies—Lon Chaney. He played here in "The Shock," "The Miracle Man," "Laugh Clown, Laugh," and with Patsy Ruth Miller, a St. Louis girl, in Victor Hugo's immortal "The Hunchback of Notre Dame." Those who saw Chaney in the role of Quasimodo then and the capable English actor, Charles Laughton in the same role a year or so ago, were more impressed by the Chaney interpretation. As the crippled beggar in Frank Packard's "The Miracle Man," Chaney rose to stardom. For many years Hollywood has mourned

the loss of this great actor who died of pernicious anemia at the height of his career.

The early twenties have been called the "flapper age" which was characterized by short skirts, a frankness of speech on topics formerly forbidden, and a reckless abandon. The personification of this era on the screen was the sprightly Colleen Moore with the bangs extending down her attractive forehead. Appearing at the Grand in 1924 as "The Perfect Flapper" and "Sally" she delighted her audiences with her frivolity. Another joy producer at this time was Harold Lloyd with the lenseless shell-rimmed glasses. In "Why Worry," "The Freshman," Grandma's Boy," and "Speedy" he provided mirth-provoking enjoyment. The wooden-faced Buster Keaton also was popular at this time.

Top admission prices were charged at the Majestic when the "super" productions began to arrive. One of the most notable of this group was "The Covered Wagon" with J. Warren Kerrigan, Lois Wilson, Alan Hale and Ernest Torrence. Others were Lillian Gish in "The White Sister" and Ramon Novarro in "Scaramouche."

The "Monte Carlo Boys" appeared on the program at the Grand in 1925 in the presentation of Mrs. Wallace Reid in "Broken Laws." They were greeted by a capacity house and given a great reception by Du Quoin people. Although heard frequently over radio stations, this was their first public appearance here. They received four curtain calls. The orchestra was composed of Lem Womack, Bob Thorpe, Marlin Hurt, Ted Thorpe, Lester Dunmeyer, and two boys from Iowa.

"Everybody's favorite of the Old Lyric," Mrs. Cenie (Yancy) Hurt sang at the Grand in 1925 where she was given generous applause. The "Charleston Boys" demonstrated the "Charleston" —a new dance.

Two great historical films of this year were "The Iron Horse, showing the building of the Union Pacific Railroad and Cecil B. DeMille's "Ten Commandments."

The Du Quoin Theatre was running large ads in the "Call" for Marion Davies in "Janice Meredith" and Mae Murray and John Gilbert in "The Merry Widow." The "sweetly impish and fascinatingly beautiful" Mary Pickford appeared in "Little Annie Rooney." Rin-Tin-Tin, a well-trained dog, was being starred. He was the first animal to attain this distinction, and was the forerunner of the animated cartoon heroes— Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck. Buck Jones and Hoot Gibson with Tom Mix were taking over the monopoly on westerns held formerly by William S. Hart.

Featured players and their productions at the Grand, Midway, and Pershing in 1927-28 included Clara Bow in "Hulu" and "Redhead." Possessing that indescribable something called "It," Clara Bow became the "It Girl" of the screen to be followed later by Jean Harlow and Ann Sheridan whose "It" has become "Omph!"

Two big pictures of the year were "Ben Hur," staring Francis X. Bushman, Beverly Bayne, and Ramon Novarro and "The Big Parade," one of the greatest war pictures, featuring Renee Adoree and John Gilbert.

The most thrilling innovation in Du Quoin motion picture history occurred on Monday, June 4, 1929, when the Grand Theatre presented its first talking picture. Playing to a full house, "Close Harmony" with Buddy Rogers and Nancy Carroll advertised as an "all talking" picture drew many people from nearby towns. Experiments with sound had been made many years before. Phonographs of the disc and cylinder type records were used in the old time movies, but with many imperfections. The new DeForest Phonofilm at the grand was a decided success. Then followed a series of fine pictures including Ramon Novarro in "The Pagan," Eddie Dowling in "The Rainbow Man," Will Rogers in a number of fine films, Marie Dressler, Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrell at the Grand. The State Theatre introduced sound in October, 1929, and showed early the picture which had revolutionized the theatre business—Al Jolson in "The Singing Fool." John Boles and Carlotta King's success in "The Desert Song" opened a new vehicle for movie exploitation and a series of operettas and musical comedies followed.

The movies have come a long way in their development—from crudities to what appears perfection. As I have attempted to show, the history of the Du Quoin motion picture entertainment is a biography of Thomas A. Reid and Theodore E. Yemm in association with their friend and business partner, W. R. Hayes. With Mr. Yemm living in St. Louis and Mr. Reid meeting a tragic death in an automobile accident in 1934, Our Town is fully aware of its loss. Their partnership was based upon sincere friendship. Their employees testify to their harmonious relations. In personality the two men were opposites, Yemm, quiet reserved, patient, always courteous, sympathetic and conciliatory; Reid,colorful, fun-loving, energetic, with a contagious enthusiasm, genial and democratic, generous, tolerant, and intensely human. The one was a balance-wheel; the other a dynamo.

Associated with them for many years was a loyal group of co-workers. Heading this list was W. A. Erwin, known by his friends as "Win." For a long time Win was the cornetist in the

orchestra, then promotion came as the theatre chain developed and in 1920 he was made assistant manager of the local theatre, but devoted some of his time in Sesses, Christopher, West Frankfort and Marion. After spending some time as manager of theatres in Marion and Benton, Win returned to his Du Quoin home and to assume the managership of the Grand under the Fox interests where everyone found him always cooperative and ready to assist in any enterprise for the bettermen of his town and community.

To these men of the "movies" the people of Du Quoin owe a debt of gratitude for their generous services which lie more deeply than in the entertainment they provided.

This picture of the Majestic orchestra, one of the finest musical aggregations of this section, was taken in 1907, during the height of the group's popularity. Orchestra members are, reading from left to right: Joe Gustat, cornet; Ray Thorwell, trombone; Frank Geiger, flute; Pete Gustat, clarinet; Earl Carr, piano; Charles Rogers, Jr., violin; Binco Gustat, drums and tympani; Thomas Jones, bass viol.

# Chapter 9

A FEW years ago when the Majestic Opera House was being dismantled, the writer observed the razing process with some sense of regret. While he had never witnessed one of its stirring productions, having been within the building on only two occasions ,this passing of the grand old center of entertainment meant the end of a colorful and picturesque period in entertainment history.

Here and there bits of information have been obtained concerning those halcyon days when the Majestic was the last word in Du Quoin entertainment. This was sufficient to arouse an inquisitive desire to learn more concerning the origin, development, decline and fall of the institution. Luckily an examination of the files of the Du Quoin Evening Call brought at least a skeleton of the story. The titles of the productions which appeared from time to time and some of the general statements advertising them were revealed in the ads. Rather detailed accounts were written regarding the construction of the theatre. Here the story practically ceased since few play reviewers or news stories written by an appreciative reporter were published. It was necessary, therefore, to interview a number of Du Quoin citizens to fill in the gaps and to clothe the skeleton with the flesh of human interest.

It did not take long to discover that the Majestic Opera House enjoyed a number of distinctions and that Du Quoin audiences were fortunate, indeed, in possessing a show house of its kind.

In the first place the theatre itself was beautifully constructed with a wide and deep stage, attractive boxes, and excellent seating arrangements. Although smaller, its interior arrangements might be compared today to the American Theatre, St. Louis' only surviving legitimate theatre.

At the time of its opening and for some time thereafter the Majestic boasted the only electric lights in town. The electricity was produced at the Du Quoin Planing Mill on Olive Street near the present site of the Midwest Dairy Products Co. and was carried on heavy cables from the mill. In those days the Majestic merited the "bright lights" with its brilliant incandescents over the proscenium arch and its numerous fly lamps. The voltage used was 220 and the current direct and many a troupe electrician "blew the works" when he thought the theatre operated on 110 volt alternating current. Hayden Danbury was electrician for the opera house for a number of years. Mr. Danbury's recollection of an electrical extravaganza was the presentation of Goethe's immortal "Faust" with Miss Olga Verne playing the part of Marguerite. A half dozen electricians would have been busy with this production. In a duel between Faust and the Devil the stage was the center of electrical flashes and spatterings. When Faust struck his sword on a metal chain to produce sparks for dramatic effect so much of Mr. Danbury's 220 voltage was shooting through it that when the sword was withdrawn its blade resembled a cross-cut saw. No effort was spared to make the productions as realistic as possible in their electrical effects. Mr. Danbury recalls when he unintentionally almost ruined a home talent production. Accustomed to following a cue sheet which gave directions, on this occasion he was obliged to follow the lines as the characters spoke them. Hearing one of them mention thunder and lightning Mr. Danbury struck the carbons with such realistic effect that the characters became frightened and ran off the stage!

Another distinction enjoyed by the Majestic was its quality of productions. Many of the finest stage shows en route from St. Louis or Chicago to Memphis made a practice of showing here "to break the jump." Some productions appearing the night before in Evansville or Cincinnati, played here before going on to Memphis or St. Louis. Many high class productions in those days had no objection to making one night stands and another common circuit followed by these shows was Belleville, Centralia (at the Pittenger Grand Opera House), Du Quoin and Cairo. It sould be noted that this was the era when actors and actresses with established reputations were quite willing to take to the road and to play to the smaller towns. This was the day when the treatres were small and the professional folk were near enough to their audiences to feel the warmth of their reaction to dramatic scenes. The day of municipal auditoriums with their immense acreage and the screeching of loudspeakers was in the future. Production with original casts appeared in the smaller cities and the people of rural communities within their radius came to see, hear and enjoy. Drama was truly taken to the people. This was the day before the "chain store" idea of organizing a half dozen companies composed of mediocre talent playing a play which had won dramatic success on Broadway. This was the day before Hollywood with its princely salaries had dazzled the prominent stage stars away from the footlights. So to Du Quoin over a period of years came a stream of talented artists to add to the dramatic and cultural background of the community.

The Opera House served as a mecca to the theatre lovers of the surrounding towns. The dirt roads were practically impassible during the show sea-

son and the railroad brought the crowds to Du Quoin. Bills were posted by John Hurt, stage manager, with the assistance of his son, Sam, in the surrounding towns. Trains would be chartered at Benton anytime that 25 round-trip tickets were sold and on many occasions the coaches were jammed by Benton people bound for the opera house in Du Quoin. Others were picked up at Christopher and Mulkeytown, arriving in time for the night's performance. They also came up the main line. Crowds would leave Carbondale and pick up passengers at De Soto and Elkville. If 10 train tickets had been bought at Elkville the fast one o'clock passenger train would let the Elkville people off, if fewer than ten persons, the train often failed to make the stop.

The year 1905 marks the birth of the Majestic Opera House idea, for the Du Quoin Evening Call of November 4 of that year states "for several weeks past Messrs. W. R. Hayes, Samuel Cotton, and F. H. Long have been organizing a stock company to assure Du Quoin a new opera house."

The site and building this group selected was that of the J. C. Eade Planing Mill on the corner of Mulberry and Poplar streets. The mill building had been constructed a few years before and was in excellent condition. With the completion of another building on Olive street the mill equipment was transferred and the Mulberry street structure was ready for alterations. Quoting the plans as published in the Call:

"The interior of the house when completed will be very similar to a metropolitan theatre, both in luxury and magnitude. The building will be equipped with a private system of electric lights and steam heat. Green, red, and white calcium lights will be used to produce the lighting effects. The main auditorium will be equipped with plush opera chairs of handsome design while the horseshoe balcony will extend to the rear. The seating capacity of the entire house will be 1200.

"Four spacious boxes will adorn each side of the interior. These will be fitted up with Brussels rugs, brass railings ,oak furniture, and potiers with a general finish of stucco work which will greatly enhance the visible portion of the boxes. Slanting floors will be installed similar to the Pittinger Grand at Centralia. The stage will have a frontage of 65 feet and a depth of 30 feet. The exterior of the building will be remodeled throughout. Officers of the ne wproject are W. R. Hayes, president; Samuel Cotton, vice-president; John Forester, treasurer, and F. H. Long, secretary."

Plans and specifications of the new theatre were prepared by George C. Garsey, a prominent Chicago architect, and were accepted by the promoters January 1, 1906. On the day before, Dec. 31, 1905, the opera chairs were purchased after an inspection of a number of types which had been displayed at the St. Nicholas Hotel.

Construction on the theatre continued through the summer of 1906 and in Monday evening, September 17, 1906, the first tour of inspection was given to Du Quoin business men during the hours of 7 to 9. Conducted by the officials Messrs. Hayes, Forester and Long, the visitors had ample opportunity to satisfy their curiosity as to the smallest details of the mechanical construction of the playhouse and to see the brilliant effects of the changes of lights and scenery. An informal program was opened by Mr. Earl Carr and remarks from many of the visitors were made. These included talks by Attorney I. R. Spilman, W. R. Hayes, W. B. Hall, and Karl Pope. At the close, P. S. Brown gave his well-know reading "Shamus O'Brien" during which the acoustic properties of the house were displayed to advantage.

While the townfolk were generally pleased with the prospect of the new playhouse a sour note was disclosed in this half-page ad which ran for several days in the Call:

"We have been criticized in that we did not spend this money to build a factory or some other enterprise that would give employment to labor. We answer we are in favor of employing labor and do employ it, but at the same time the working man needs some recreation. Bread is the staff of life and is an excellent food, but we cannot live on bread alone. Most of us want a piece of pie occasionally."

As the date set for the grand opening, October 31, approached Du Quoin citizens eagerly looked forward to the great occasion. As a means of partially financing the enterprise, patrons bought tickets at a wide range of prices including $5, $15, and $20 seats. Some generous patrons probably paid even more. The performance presented for the opening was Richard Carle's brilliant and spectacular musical production, "The Mayor of Tokio." The company of 60 persons arrived at 4:12 p. m. and the scenery and stage effects did not arrive until 5:30.

The opening was a gala occasion. The theatre was packed and everybody was there to see who else was there. This performance in the new theatre with its brilliant new-fangled electric lights served as a remarkable opportunity for the women to display the new dresses their seamstresses had labored for weeks to prepare.

The performance itself proved highly entertaining and was well received. Its beautiful scenery and costumes offset the musical disadvantages of the production. Because of a musician's mix-up the production was devoid of the melodious offerings of an orchestra and the entire production was staged with only a piano and drums accompani-

ment. The show had played the evening before at the Pittinger Grand in Centralia. Arriving in Du Quoin at a late hour the impulsive musical director found some fault with the Majestic orchestra composed of local men and proceeded to obtain the Centralia orchestra. By curtain time that orchestra had arrived, but the management, loyal to the local organization, refused to allow the Centralia orchestra to play. Therefore, with two orchestras on hand, the opening performance was obliged to rely on the pianist of the troupe who played with one hand and directed with the other.

On November 9, 1906, appeared the original New York stars Hilda Thomas and Lou Hall in "The Show Girl." This was followed by the appearance of a star comedian who was destined to become a Du Quoin favorite, Oscar L. Figman. Appearing with him in the play, "The Tenderfoot," was Miss Ruth White who was famous as the girl with the most beautiful back and arms in America. The outstanding song of the production which remains in the memories of Du Quoin citizens was "I met My Love in the Alamo."

Miss Edith Fuller, advertised as the "American Sarah Bernhardt," was the star of "Fires of St. John." The first matinee presented at the opera house was "McFadden's Flats," with George and Alex, two famous Broadway midget comedians. Dickson and Mustard's "Humpty Dumpty and the Black Dwarf," headed by "America's peerless clown," James Bornelli, had gone broke in Cairo because of the elopement of the manager with the troupe's funds and they came on to Du Quoin and played at the Majestic to obtain enough railroad fare to return to their homes.

Arriving here for the first time was W. E. Nankeville's "Human Hearts." This, however, was the final tour of John D'Ormand and Agnes Fuller who over a period of years travelled from coast to coast to make this play famous. Also appearing in 1906 were Rowland and Clifford's "Over Niagara Falls" and Mr. Lawrence Evart playing two characters in the dramatic success, "We Are King."

Du Quoin audiences were offered a dramatic feast during the year 1907. In rapid succession through the playseason appeared the following:

John Cumpson in "Ole Oleson," B. C. Whitney's "Isle of Spice," Julian Mitchell's "Wonderland" with Little Chip and Mary Marble, Nat M. Will's, "The Lucky Dog," "The Vanderbilt Cup," Cole and Johnson in "The Shoo-Fly Regiment," Jane B. Corcoran and James M. Brophy in Henrik Ibsen's famous play, "The Doll House," Olga Verne as Marguerite in Goethe's "Faust," and George M. Cohan's "Little Johnny Jones."

B. C. Whitney's "Isle of Spice," proved the biggest hit of all the big musical comedies appearing here. The troupe played two return engagements and after the first showing, demanded little commercial advertising. This piquant musical mixture was filled with tuneful melodies which were sung long after the show left town. Du Quoin citizens still recall "Drink a Highball at Nightfall, Be Good Fellows While You May," and "Pretty Peggy." These titles may see mdrab and colorless to reader unfamiliar with their presentation. Lying within the memories of many are the rich associations of the dimly lighted theatre, the brilliance of the dazzling spot light, the expert orchestration, the violin obligato, and the charm and grace of the singer. Some of these selections proved so popular that the singers were called back time and again. Attractive stage settings, beautiful scenery and costumes, clever dance routines, sparkling comedy and beautiful girls combined to make the musical comedies enjoyable.

Probably the most magnificent production to come to the opera house was Julian Mitchell's "Wonderland" headed by the diminutive comedian, Little Chip, and the inimitable Mary Marble. This was the largest Broadway show ever playing one-night stands. The company carried 70 persons and travelled almost exclusively by special train. Besides two Pullman sleepers and a day coach for the company, two 60-foot baggage cars were required to transport the scenery and baggage. In addition to the cast were three electricians, two master carpenters,, a corps of stage hands, two property men and two wardrobe mistresses. Tickets for this production were sold at $.50, $.75, $1 and $1.50.

On March 23, 1907, Cole and Johnson with their all-negro troupe, "The Shoo-Fly Regiment," proved the most popular of all-negro shows. Cole, a clever character comedian and Johnson, outstanding baritone vocalist and pianist, delighted their audience from start to finish. These men were the composers of the tuneful songs: "Under the Bamboo Tree," "Congo Love Song," "The Maiden With the Dreamy Eyes," "Nobody's Looking But the Owl and the Moon," "Didn't He Ramble, Mandy?" Another good negro comedian with this show was the famous Billy Kersands whose mouth was so large that he could put an ordinary saucer in it. He was said to have pleased and delighted Queen Victoria of England with this accomplishment.

A famous Broadway comedian with an established reputation was Nat M. Wills in "The Lucky Dog." His initial appearance on the stage in this production consisted of falling out of an awning. Probably Du Quoin's first taste of professional drama at the opera house was the famous play, "The Doll House," written by the eminent Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen. George M. Cohan's "Little Johnny Jones" was another big musical show with gorgeous settings which was presented

in 1907. A strikingly beautiful scene in this production was that of a girl on shipboard. With moonlight effects thrown on the scene, her lover sang a farewell song with the currently popular "Goodbye Flo."

By this time some readers may begin to wonder how the stage of the opera house could accomodate the elaborate stage settings of some of the larger productions. The answer is: it did not. Sometimes not all the scenery and equipment was removed from the cars. On other occasions the entire equipment would be hauled to the theatre by the drays and wagons. Sets essential to the presentation were set up on the stage and the remainder stacked at the rear of the building on Elm street, or what is now generally considered the alley.

The task of moving the scenery, drops, lighting equipment, and huge costume trunks was a long and arduous one. Sometimes the workers started hauling the scenery about noon. This was set up, the drops hung, the props taken out, the wardrobe trunks unpacked, and everything put in readiness sometimes just a few minutes before the first curtain call. After the show these were taken down, packed and hauled to the cars on the Illinois Central siding. The stage hands finished their duties at two or three o'clock in the morning after working all day. The work was hard and strenuous but the job was not without its compensations. In addition to the pay, these workers felt themselves a necessary part of the theatre, as they were. While the actors enjoyed and basked in the approval of their appreciative audiences, the stage hands knew they were an essential part of the whole. The pay was small, but the pleasures of seeing the plays from a good position among the audience or in the wings was compensation enough. Here they met an assortment of personalities who breathed and lived a life of adventure across the footlights. Despite the regulation 50-cent fine assessed troupe members by some companies for conversing with the stage hands, some interesting acquaintances were made.

The opera house had a regular supply of stage men who augmented the workers supplied by the various companies. Four flymen were needed to pull up the drops. Eight stage hands stood ready to handle the scenery. The theatre usually furnished two or three property men. The troupes, as a rule, carried a carpenter, a prop man, an electrician, and an assistant electrician. John Hurt presided for years over this important crew as stage manager. Hayden Danbury was chief electrician and H. C. Thornsbury was chief usher. Sam Hurt worked with his father and also assisted in the electrician's duties. Guy Finnegan had charge of the candy concession and sold to the audience. He kept the candy in a large wicker bread basket. The top was covered with a wooden cover and kept locked to prevent his candy supply from falling into the hands of boy marauders. The boys who worked around the show soon learned that by putting a foot firmly on the top and pulling on the handle the sides bulged sufficiently to reach the candy. The resourceful Finnegan cured this habit by dousing the candy with a generous application of croton oil as some Du Quoin men will testify

The Majestic Opera House boasted an orchestra which was second to none in any theatre of its size. Concert master and leader of this aggregation was Charles Rogers, Jr. The personnel shifted through the years but included the following, some for long periods and others for shorter terms:

Thomas Jones, W. A. Erwin, Frank Geiger, Arthur Holden, J. L. Higgins, J. W. Grear, Edward Dwyer, Roy Kean, the Gustat brothers, D. J. Goldbrown, G. H. Knetzger, Albert Rogers, Charles, Rodman, Earl Carr, Herbert Hampton, and others.

Their work, too, was largely a labor of love. Some, after working all day in the mines, rushed to the theatre after a hurried evening meal for a rehearsal before curtain time. Each show carried its musical director who supplied the music and worked with the orchestra if time permitted. Some of these music directors were indolent and neglected to give the group their opportunity to become partially familiar with the music. Others were tempermental and exhibited nasty tempers, much to the annoyance and discomfort of the local orchestra, its members of which were loyal to their work. Other show directors were real musicians and real men. And this was a part of the pleasure of playing in a theatre orchestra. With a number of troupes making return engagements, opportunity was given for the formation of true and lasting friendships. But it was a hard school and the men who played in the orchestra over a period of years developed a skill and a technique which made them all outstanding musicians. Nearly all the companies held a high regard for the local orchestra and complimented Manager Hayes time and again upon the excellence of its performance.

The members of the orchestra developed a comradeship and loyalty to each other which has lasted through the years. Each holds in esteem the musical talents of his colleagues. It is interesting to note their recognition and appreciation of the skill of their leader, Mr. Charles Rogers, Jr. No music was too difficult for him to read and to play. He was never at a loss and led his orchestra through the difficult musical scores sometimes without benefit of rehearsal. Under his talented leadership the Majestic Orchestra was recognized for years throughout Southern Illinois as one of superior qualities of attainment.

# Chapter 10

DURING the early years of its operation the Majestic Opera House boasted its share of the old time minstrel shows. Minstrelsy from the time that Stephen C. Foster's beautiful folk songs were written and introduced by E. T. Christy in his minstrel shows until the early 1920's played an important role in the history of American entertainment.

Minstrel troupes travelled the country over, and despite their time-worn order of procedure, seldom failed to attract a pleased and appreciative audience. To Du Quoin, over a period of years, they came, some with titles like "Chocolate Town" minstrels, the "Seldom Fed" minstrels, the "Alabama Smart Set" minstrels, the "Carolina" minstrels, the "Yankee Doodle" minstrels, the "Dandy Dixie" minstrels, and P. G. Lowrey's "Dixie Fashion Plate" minstrels. Other prominent minstrel organizations included the James Hodge minstrels, the Price-Bonelli minstrels, Harvey's greater minstrels, J. M. Busby and his minstrels, and the peer of them all, John V. Vogel, the minstrel king, and his "Big City" minstrels.

Some of these were composed of all-colored troupes with their "Creole Beauty Chorus," but the typical minstrel most pleasing to Du Quoin audiences was the one composed entirely of white men. No dancing chorus was needed in its entertainment. Vogel's Minstrels carried a magnificent purple curtain which, when drawn, revealed rows of red-and-white candy striped satin pants, exaggerated wing collars, shiny black faces and rolling eyes. The evening of fun began when the entire group sang forth their opening song and the interlocutor spoke the classic line: "Gentlemen, be seated!"

Then came a series of time-worn jokes, simple and absurd to our more sophisticated tastes now.

Mr. Bones: "Say, Mr. Interlocutor, what's de difference between you and a jackass?"

Mr. Interlocutor: "I'm sure I don't know. What is the difference?"

Mr. Bones: "Why, a jackass wears a collar."

Mr. Interlocutor: "Why, so do I!"

Mr. Bones: "Then there ain't no difference!"

Solos from the end-men followed with the entire group harmonizing on the chorus. The late Bert Williams' classic minstrel song, "Somebody Else, Not Me," which was sung by Rochester in Jack Benny's radio show several weeks ago, never failed to win great applause. One year a soloist with the Vogel Minstrel here had walked down stage and with a beautifully clear tenor voice sang the first verse of a song. His voice failed on the chorus and one of the end-men carried on to cover up the situation. After the performance, the unfortunate tenor stated to his associates and the stage employees that he had lost his singing voice. Several weeks later George Curtis saw him in Eldorado and he had not regained his ability to sing.

With one of these minstrel shows was Marshall Walker, author of the famous minstrel song, "It Takes a Long, Tall, Brown-Skin Gal to Make a Preacher Lay His Bible Down." While appearing here in Du Quoin between trips to the Majestic basement and the piano in the orchestra pit, Walker composed the equally well-known minstrel number, "Somebody Done Me Wrong."

In the second half of the performance came the cakewalk, eccentric dancing, and humorous and dramatic readings by the end-men. The ritual was seldom changed, but the minstrel lasted almost as long as vaudeville itself in the people's enjoyment.

Another type of show which ran concurrently from the Civil War period along with the minstrel was the so-called "Tom" show. Shortly after Mrs. Harriett Beecher Stowe had immortalized Uncle Tom in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," some resourceful showman dramatized her famous book and the "Tom" shows spread like wildfire all over the country. Played in tents and opera houses throughout the nation, thousands of Americans, through at least three generations, thrilled at Eliza's desperate escape, hissed at Simon Legree, and wept with Uncle Tom at Little Eva's death.

A perennial favorite among the "Tom" shows coming to Du Quoin was George P. Stetson's Uncle Tom's Cabin Company. Apparently the first time (according to the Call files) at the Neighbor's Opera House in 1905 and returning to the Majestic in 1908 this organization appeared intermittently until its final appearance in 1923! Advertised as a $35,000 production, the Stetson show, claimed itself to be the "Barnum of them all" with 65 men, women and children; an orchestra of 15; and a pack of the fiercest Russian bloodhounds ever seen on any stage! A grand street parade was given in the morning or afternoon in which wagons with paper-mache figures representing the various characters in the play were represented. Tiny Shetland ponies pulled the wagons.

Highlighting the 1908 dramatic season were the following: William J. McCartney and The Broilers in "The Royal Chef," James Kyrle McCurdy in "The Old Clothes Man," the comic opera, "Miss Bob White," with Frank Deshon, "Jane Eyre," "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," and Eddie Hume in

"The Flower of the Ranch." In the latter, Eddie Hume or "Skivers," as he was called, was a decided hit with Du Quoin audiences.

The play, "The Flower of the Ranch," opened with a cavalry scene. Cavalrymen are in a western saloon. Skivers stands down stage wearing his red wig and dilapidated straw hat. The Colonel calls in his men and a band of cowboys and orders drinks around. The drinks are poured, the usual regards are paid, and the glasses drained of their contents. Skivers stands watching the scene but not participating in the drinks. The question is asked:"Who are these on? The Colonel replies: "On Skivers!" Whereupon that individual, with a puzzled look, slowly draws the money from his jeans. The bartender takes the money and returns the change to the Colonel who pockets it. This procedure is followed three or four times, on each occasion with Skivers dry Adam's apple bobbing up and down and Skivers paying the bill and the Colonel pocketing the change. Finally Skivers walks over to the Colonel, taps him timidly on the back, and says: "Pardon me, sir, but would it be all right for me to buy drinks for the crowd?"

The biggest show ever played in Du Quoin was "The Three Twins," with Victor Morley and Bessie Clifford, the "Yama-Yama Girl." The dance which featured this production is remembered by opera house enthusiasts as the finest ever seen on a Du Quoin stage. Miss Clifford danced over the backs of the chorus girls and received so many encores that she finally had to rest against the wings and walked off the stage amid thundrous applause. This production was also an extravaganza in its mechanical and electrical effects. An electric swing weighing three tons and requiring two regular electricians to set up, featured its scenic effects. Constructured entirely of steel, the swing held six baskets decorated with four thousand 4-watt light bulbs. The baskets, with a girl in each, were swung out over the audience.

On February 10, 1904, H. H. Frazee's peer of all musical comedies, "The Isle of Spice," made a return showing. According to the Call reporter "the troupe arived on No. 605 today and the usual crowd of gappers was at the depot to see the arrival. The show girls, however, not wishing to be so closely examined by the curious throng, got off on the other side of the train from the depot. This did them no good, however, as the crowd numbering twenty-five or thirty, rushed across the rear platform of the smoker like a bunch of cattle in a corn crib."

One of the outstanding productions of the year was Richard Wagner's mystical festival "Parsifal." The setting was laid in the mountains and castle of Montsalvat during the Middle Ages. Scenic effects and stage lighting have been described as beautiful and spectacular.

In 1910 appeared the Lyman twins in "The Yankee Drummers," who appeared later in "The Prize Winners" and "The Speculators." Popular with Du Quoin audiences these twins supplied plenty of comedy in their various roles of mistaken identity. Playing in one of their productions at the Majestic was an actress who had the distinction of playing a juvenile role in the comedy "Our American Cousin," at Ford's Theatre on the night of April 14, 1865 when President Abraham Lincoln was shot by John Wilkes Booth.

Over a space of several years a number of beautiful light operas made their appearance at the Majestic. Among these were Victor Herbert's "The Red Mill," which set patrons singing the hit of the production, 'Because You're You"; "Madame Sherry"; the Reginald DeKoven Opera Company in the great comic opera "Robin Hood." Admission prices for this production ranged from $2 to 75 cents. This production was afterwards referred to as "Du Quoin's greatest show." The exquisite melodies of "Brown October Ale," still haunt the spot. Oscar Straus' "The Chocolate Soldier," Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Mikado," "The Gingham Girl," and Ralph Dunbar's "Bohemian Girl," with James Stevens and Lorna Doone Jackson were tuneful treats.

The Bard of Avon had his fling at the Majestic. In 1916 direct from the Schubert-Garrick Theatre in St. Louis came the eminent actor, Mr. John E. Kellerd, to present Shakespeare's immortal "The Merchant of Venice" and "Hamlet." The eccentric Kellerd appeared as Shylock in the afternoon performance and as Hamlet in the evening. Before the opening of the evening performance, the actor, from some reason, worked himself into a tempermental tantrum and painted the air blue with Shakespearean profanity. The stage hands, accustomed to the Southern Illinois brand of cuss-words which were more modern by some 300 years, were unable to cope with the situation. The champion "cusser" of the stage crew appeared dumb as compared to the volatile and rampant Kellerd whose fiery invectives fairly scorched the scenery. Consequently the stage hands went on a strike and refused to move a peg. As a result the "melancholy Dane" was obliged to present his play using only one stage set—that of a church-yard cemetery. The angered stage crew were forced to admit at the conclusion of Kellerd's brilliant performance that they had never seen finer acting on any stage at any time!

One of the greatest dramas ever seen on the Majestic's stage was "Madame X" with the bril-

liant and talented actress, Miss Laura Frankenfield. The play itself was based on the broken home theme. Happily married and possessing a young son, the heroine succumbs to temptation and runs away with another man. The years pass and the mother, in desperation, murders the man who has ruined her life. Brought to trial before a jury selected from the audience, and having no defense counsel, a young attorney is appointed to defend her. It is his first case. The lawyer is her son. In a sensational and dramatic courtroom scene, packed with pathos and dramatic suspense, the mother emits a blood-curdling scream at the end with such effect that the audience has not forgotten to this day.

Other successes among the melodramas were W. Frederick Phillips in "The Servant in the House," Oliver Morosco's production "Peg O' My Heart," with Rea Martin, "The Rosary," Ann Nichol's record-breaking comedy-drama, "Abie's Irish Rose," and W. F. Mann's "A Broken Idol." In the latter production, theatre-goers recall that Eli Cross, likeable Du Quoin negro citizen who possessed a fog-horn laugh, almost broke up the show when he laughed during one of the most tender and touching love scenes. The stage lovers dropped the fervency of their ardour and looked in speechless amazement at each other. The audience, familiar with Eli's laugh, joined in and when the unfortunate actors had regained their composure, they continued with their stage business.

On October 12, 1914, Mr. Joe Curtis became affiliated with the management of the Majestic, and the showing of motion pictures was emphasized during the periods when stage productions were not being presented. It was sometime during this period that one of those accidents occurred which seem serious at the time, but prove quite the contrary when viewed in retrospect.

It was the time when the "Living Statues" acts were in vogue. Two girls were presenting one of these art posing acts and, in the powerful spot light, looked like figures carved in alabaster. In order that they might change costume quickly their entire act was staged on a revolving pedestal, and while one posed, the other changed. One night Messrs. Hayes and Curtis were counting the receipts when they heard an unusual rumpus which proved to be a woman rushing down the stairway to the theatre exit. In indignation she snorted: "I've never been so mortified in my life! I'll never set a foot in this indecent place again!"

With this pronouncement the lady bolted out of the door.

Mr. Hayes turned to Mr. Curtis and Mr. Curtis turned to Mr. Hayes in open-mouthed amazement. Getting the same idea at the same time they rushed up the stairs to learn the cause of the woman's discomfiture. They soon saw. Because of some mistake, the pedestal had been turned too, too soon, revealing the living statue in such a state of nudity before the spotlight that everybody was shocked. It was terrible! Mr. Hayes turned to Mr. Curtis and moaned: "Joey, we're ruined!" But there was nothing to do but to continue the act and trust that the people would realize it was a mistake. During the next day the harassed managers worried over their misfortune, fearing that their theatrical days had ended. But by curtain time that night the house was packed!

Realism was achieved by the various productions in appearing with automobiles and live stock on the opera house stage. Racing autos were used in "The Vanderbilt Cup." Two real Indian ponies were with "The Squaw Man." Oscar Figman, the comedian in "The Tenderfoot," made his stage entrance riding a lop-eared burro. Race horses appeared with the play "In Old Kentucky" and the mule "Ebenezer" which had been featured with McIntyre and Heath's great musical comedy "The Ham Tree," appeared here in a vaudeville sketch.

Probably the most popular type of production was the musical comedy. In addition to those already mentioned these included George M. Cohan's "Over There," with Billy (Single) Clifford which featured an excellent all-girl band; Rowland and Clifford's "September Morn"; "Honeymoon Limited"; "Come Along Mary"; "Tom Arnold's "The Prince of Tonight"; Eddie Raye in "Pretty Baby"; John Cort's musical comedy sensation "Listen Lester"; "Miss Blue Eyes"; "A Honolulu Honeymoon" featuring Ned Melroy, considered one of the best eccentric dancers in musical comedy; Mike Sachs in "Oh! Baby!"; "Cheer Up, Mabel"; "Raymond Hitchcock's "Hitchy Koo"; "Listen to Me!"; Barbara Bronell in "My China Doll"; Sissle and Blake's "Shuffle Along," Mitzie Sassie and Hal Kiter in "The Vanity Box"; "Black Patti" and her troubadours in an all-negro musical show; Halton Powell's "Henpecked Henry," "The Winter Garden Follies," and "The Million Dollar Doll."

Representative farces included A. H. Wood's "Parlor, Bedroom and Bath"; "Potash and Perlmutter," "Peck's Bad Boy"; and "Twin Beds." The best mystery melodramas included Mary Roberts Rhinhart's and Avery Hopwood's "The Bat," which kept the large audience in suspense to the end. Another was "The Cat and the Canary." In the play, "The Last Warning," the action took place all over the theatre—on the stage, in the boxes, up and down the aisles. Phosphorous painted on the faces of some of the characters created such

a ghostly effect that certain members among the colored audience departed in haste from the theatre. The play, "The Wolf," held a distinction in having the smallest cast of any full-length stage production—only four characters were in the cast.

The "Call" files of 1916 reveal the following incident:

"Saturday night about 11:30 when John Hurt and James Rapp were back on the stage preparing to close up for the night they heard a thud and a sharp cry out in the parquet of the house. They advanced cautiously and discovered in the dim light cast by the illumination behind the curtain a small boy about ten years of age. He had his clothes stripped off to his underwear as if he were ready for bed. Mr. Hurt asked the boy what he was doing there and undressed at that hour of the night.

"The boy spoke in a fearless manner and said he had gone to sleep in the balcony and in his sleep had taken off his clothes, thinking he was at home. He took the narrow railing at the front of the balcony for his bed and lay down there to spend the night.

"The boy said: 'I must have tumbled off the railing because the next thing I knew I was down here on the floor with a pain in my right leg.'

"It was a 13-foot fall and it was a miracle he was not seriously injured. His name was Vancil."

Another returning favorite through the years from 1907 to 1924 was W. P. Patton. He appeared from year to year in "The Little Homestead," "His Friend, the Widow," "A Wise Boob," and "The Slow-Poke."

Interspersed among the higher priced productions were the so-called 'Ten, Twent', Thirt," stock companies, given this term because of the price of admission. Some of these companies were of mediocre calibre, while others were superior to some of the more high-priced productions. These companies would appear from 3 nights to two weeks, presenting a different play each night. The companies and some of their rather amusing titles are as follows: Sherman Stock Co. presenting "A Mormon Thief"; "The Woman of Mystery"; Frences Greene Stock Company presenting "East Lynne," "Rip Van Winkle," "Slaves of the Desert," "A Country Girl," "The Black Flag,' "Lady Audleys Secret," "The Two Orphans"; Chas. Breckenridge Stock Co. presenting "Thorns and Orange Blossoms," "Down Where the Cotton Blossoms Grow"; Billie Plumlee's Comedians; Curtis-Shankland Stock Co.; and Smith-Willis Stock Co. The Plumlee and Curtis shows, produced by the well-known Du Quoin actors, have been described in a previous chapter.

The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra appeared at the Majestic on two occasions, the first time under the direction of Max Zach, and the second time under the eminent conductor, Rudolf Ganz. On the latter occasion Joe Gustat, first trumpet player of the orchestra and former member of the Majestic orchestra, was presented with a large bouquet of flowers by his Du Quoin friends and admirers. The Great Lakes Naval Band appeared in concert February 22, 1918.

After the inauguration of the motion pictures at the Majestic and the decline of the larger stage shows, the small "tab" show was almost the sole survivor of the stage show. These were small companies with a dancing chorus of six or eight girls and a comedian or two. These possessed little merit and finally movies and vaudeville ended the long and dramatically successful career of the Majestic Opera House.

# Chapter 11

OVER a period of years it is interesting to observe the appearance of celebrated or renowned persons who have occasion to visit a town for one reason or another. Within the space of one man's life he can live "in the house by the side of the road" and witness a procession of personalities, who, because of some talent or ability, have made themselves widely known.

Political leaders of state and national fame, millionaire mine owners, prominent preachers, suffragettes, orators, criminals, Siamese twins, daredevil racers, equestriennes, a human cannon ball, orchestra leaders, labor leaders, musicians, giants and midgets, and many others have appeared on Du Quoin's streets.

Years ago, when P. T. Barnum, master showman, was touring the country with his famous midgets and the Swedish Nightingale, Jenny Lind, his most famous attraction, General Tom Thumb, stayed at the old City Hotel here in Du Quoin. This hotel, famous in Du Quoin for years, was located at the site of the New Merchants Hotel, and was operated by Dan Gill and his wife. So far, it has been impossible to ascertain whether the tiny General's equally famous wife, Lavinia Warren, and her midget brother, Commodore Nutt, stayed at the hotel.

Carrie Nation, America's No. 1 suffragette and prohibitionist, created a sensation when she arrived in Du Quoin October 10, 1905. "Without any previous warning, the noted Kansas saloon smasher arrived in town late in the afternoon from a Saline county town. Her appearance attracted attention on the streets and when it was generally known that she was really Carrie Nation, no little excitement prevailed. Several hundred persons assembled at the depot to catch a glimpse of the woman whose reputation as a temperance worker extends from coast to coast.

"Though extremely hoarse from her many addresses, Mrs. Nation arose in the depot and spoke extemporaneously to the boys. She did not speak of the terrors of drink but dwelt on the cigarette. She discouraged the habit and said that the use of the cigarette was degenerating to manhood."

On October 19, Mrs. Nation returned to Du Quoin to speak at the Opera House. The theme of her address was her life and history in the work of temperance. What aroused the greatest comment among her hearers was her unrestrained personal attack on the 17 saloon keepers of Du Quoin. After her address, Mrs. Nation sold a number of her miniature hatchets as mementoes of her first lecture in Du Quoin.

On her way to the opera house, Mrs. Nation saw a party of men gathered in J. L. Ragland's saloon and she could not refrain from entering the place to make a brief talk. She censured the proprietor to the widest extent of her vocabulary. She left on the midnight train for Girard, Illinois, where she was scheduled to lecture.

On May 31, 1869, General John A. Logan of Murphysboro gave Du Quoin a significant distinction when he spoke here at the first Memorial Day services of the nation. This day of honoring and respecting the dead was inaugurated here. General Logan was to serve later as Illinois senator to the United States Congress.

Two of America's greatest orators, Colonel Robert Ingersoll and Colonel William Jennings Bryan have appeared in Du Quoin. Col. Ingersoll, known throughout the United States for his agnosticism and his brilliant speaking ability, addressed a large assembly of Du Quoin citizens years ago in the Keyes City Park. During the course of his address, two or three "boys" of '61, in an hilarious mood, began marching around the park, beating on a drum. At first the Colonel tried to ignore the disturbance. But it was too much, finally, for his patience and he shouted, "Will some one please kick a hole in that drum, or the drummer, I don't give a damn which!"

On June 5, 1909, William Jennings Bryan, three-time Democratic candidate for the Presidency and destined to make Woodrow Wilson President of the United States in 1913, spent a few minutes shaking hands with Du Quoin people who had met him at the train. He was on his way to Ewing College to deliver the commencement address and to speak at Marion and Benton. The year before he had spoken to 3000 people in Pinckneyville.

Another orator of no little ability who succeeded in arousing interest here in Du Quoin was Henry R. Rathbone. While his visits here were in the interests of his candidacy for Congressman-at-Large his family background was one to hold his audiences spellbound. His father, Major Rathbone and his mother, who was a Miss Harris and when a fiancee of the Major was with him as guests of President Abraham Lincoln and Mrs. Lincoln at Ford's Theatre on the fateful night of April 14, 1865. When the assassin, John Wilkes Booth, fired his cowardly shot into the head of President Lincoln, Booth dropped his revolver and drew forth a broad-bladed dagger, and, as Major Rathbone leaped to seize him, Booth slashed his arm. Then Booth plunged over the box rail to the stage, but catching one of the spurs of his riding boot in the flag which draped

the Presidential box, he alighted in such a way as to break his leg. Limping to the stage exit he made his escape. Congressman Rathbone held his audience breathless with narration of this story.

Outstanding religious speakers to come to Du Quoin included Dwight L. Moody who was to head the famous Moody Bible Institute; Billy Sunday, America's all-time showman evangelist; Bishop William A. Quayle of the Methodist Church, one of the most powerful preachers of his age; and Steve Burke, reformed cowboy roughneck and tabernacle evangelist.

Du Quoin people drove to nearby towns to hear Billy Sunday exhort the sinners of Southern Illinois. On Wednesday, November 9, 1927, he spoke for an hour to an overflow crowd at the Grand Theatre. The high school was dismissed for the morning and the students gave Billy Sunday their traditional 15 rahs!

Labor leaders of national importance to appear in Du Quoin at various times included the vitriolic champion of labor, Mother Jones; John L. Lewis, stormy petrel and battle-scarred veteran of many a labor dispute; Philip Murray, present head of the Congress of Industrial Organizations; and Frank Farrington, prominent miners' executive.

A number of outstanding leaders in the field of American political life have appeared in Du Quoin throughout the years. Despite the mistaken and pessimistic attitude of many people that politics is dominated by scandalous intrigue and rascality some of the finest and strongest characters in America have been and still are to be found in the field of politics.

To Du Quoin came Senator S. M. Cullom of Illinois, who for more than a decade had worked tirelessly for the cause of the farmers and against railroad abuses. As a member of the Senate his bill became the Interstate Commerce Act of February, 1887, and the most important piece of legislation in Cleveland's first administration.

In 1924 Hiram Johnson, former governor of California and Republican candidate for the nomination for the Presidency, preached his progressive theories of party politics to an overflow crowd at the Majestic Opear House. In 1933, after the election of 1932, appeared Norman Thomas, Socialist candidate for the Presidency. Speaking in the unheated Majestic in the cold of winter, this tall, gray-haired ex-minister told the miners that the only solution to their problems lay in the government ownership of the mines. This was during the depression when unemployment and despair had struck the coal fields.

Governors and candidates for the governorship all came to Du Quoin or spoke somewhere in the county. Richard Yates—both of them, father and son, governors of Illinois, were here. James W. Fifer, who received a pair of socks knitted by Grandma Heywood, who lived for years in an old house where the post office is located now, was in Du Quoin at various times.

Charles S. Deneen, Frank O. Lowden, Edward F. Dunn, Len Small, Louis L. Emmerson, Henry Horner, and Governor Dwight Green—all have been here to meet Du Quoin people.

Vice-President Henry A. Wallace, as candidate for the office in 1940, spoke at the Du Quoin State Fairgrounds to thousands.

Of United States Senators there have been many. Representative of these are Medill McCormick, Frank L. Smith, L. Y. Sherman, James Hamilton Lewis, James M. Slattery, William B. McKinley, William Lorimer, Scott Lucas, and C. Wayland Brooks.

Colorful characters and interesting people would include William Hale Thompson, former mayor of Chicago, who hired a circus parade to ballyhoo one of his campaigns; Congressman T. V. Smith, eloquent professor of political science of the University of Chicago, who toured the state boasting of his residence in Texas and that he was 21 years of age before he had ever seen a Republican! The charming Ruth Hanna McCormick, daughter of the "president-maker" Mark Hanna and as widow of Senator Medill McCormick spoke twice in Du Quoin to defeat Charles S. Deneen for the nomination for the U. S. senatorship in the Republican primary but to lose to the gallant J. Ham Lewis, of the pink whiskers, in the fall election. Norman L. Jones, William Stratton, Republicans and Democrats, have brought to Du Quoin a wealth of interesting personalities.

The field of sports has been represented by George A. Huff, director of athletics at the University of Illinois, who spoke at an athletic banquet at the First Baptist Church which was sponsored by the Du Quoin Rotary Club. Bobby Veach, who formerly played for the Du Quoin Models, appeared here on October 12, 1922, with the Detroit Tigers, of which he was the captain, and defeated the Du Quoin Merchants 8-2. Fifteen hundred persons saw this game. The Merchants' line-up was Cheto 3b, Fox ss, McLaughlin 2b, Leek c, Newby lf, Harriman 1b, A. Golden rf, Warren cf, and Collard p.

Boxing has been represented by Jess Willard, who was in town a few years ago. Racing enthusiasts have included Barney Oldfield, Gus Schrader, Jimmy Wilbern, Jimmy Lynch, and the airplane crasher, Captain Frank Frakes. Charley Paddock, champion track star, spoke here in 1927 under the auspices of the high school Hi-Y.

Music has been represented twice by appearances of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, in

1911 under the direction of Max Zach, and in 1926 under the direction of Rudolph Ganz. Skovgaard, noted Danish violinist, appeared in 1923 under the auspices of the Baptist Church. The Musurgia Club, an active musical aggregation of Du Quoin Women, was particularly successful for a number of years in bringing outstanding musical talent to the city. Mr. Conway Durham, as manager of the Southern Illinois Music Company located at 6 North Division Street, was instrumental in bringing a number of Edison phonograph artists to the city. Among these was Vernon Dalhart, eminent vocalist. In recent years Clyde Lucas and Johnny (Scat) Davis have appeared in connection with the Fair.

Du Quoin, like other towns, has had its share of criminal visitors. The most notorious of these was Charlie Berger, who did some of his banking with one of the Du Quoin banks. Berger will be remembered as one of Egypt's bad boys who was hanged a few years ago. An earlier and tougher outlaw of the vicinity was Sam Hilderbrand. This individual was a notorious desperado and guerilla. He terrorized helpless communities in Missouri, Arkansas and Tennessee during the Civil War and had a reputation of killing over a hundred men.

After his lawless career in Missouri, Hilderbrand sought refuge and peace in the unsettled bottoms of the Kaskaskia, north of Chester, where he lived for several years in a rudely built hut. He went to Pinckneyville on various occasions to secure residence property. On March 1, 1872, while in the county seat, he became engaged in an altercation with John Bischof and Hilderbrand slashed Bischof in the neck. He was captured shortly afterward by Constable John (Lank) Ragland and Matt Rule and while being taken to jail, shrewdly whipped a dirk from his pocket and cut Ragland in the leg. Without a moment's hesitation, the latter shot and killed Hildebrand on the spot.

In the entertainment field many notable characters have been in Du Quoin. Through the efforts of Mr. W. R. Hayes in connection with the Majestic Opera House many celebrities could be mentioned. The opera house, however, will be considered as a separate topic in this series. More recently Mr. Hayes has brought talent of national importance in connection with the Du Quoin State Fair. The "Human Cannon Ball," Hugo Zachini, is widely known. May Wirth, world-famous equestrienne demonstrated her riding skill to Du Quoin spectators. The German giants, appearing a few years ago, are widely known in the entertainment field. Violet and Daisy Hilton, the famous San Antonio Siamese twins, have appeared at the Grand Theatre.

Patsy Kelly, then in the height of her movie popularity, enlivened a dull Sunday afternoon a few years ago when she appeared at the Du Quoin Candy Kitchen in company with Wilma Cox, niece of Mrs. Lane Shankland, whose husband's show troupe was playing Du Quoin that week. Patsy was driving through from the west in a handsome Packard driven by a liveried chauffeur. Dressed in slacks and with her usual smile, Patsy proved readily accessible to the fans and signed several hundred autographs within the space of an hour.

Joe Leiter, multimillionaire coal dealer and founder of Zeigler was a frequent visitor in Du Quoin. President Porfirio Diaz, en route to Chicago for an operation was seen by Du Quoin citizens at the railroad station. William G. McAdoo, Secretary of the Treasury, Director General of the Railroads and President Wilson's son-in-law, was also seen at the station during World War I. It is certain that many other celebrities were seen here too.

There is no doubt, also, that many renowned persons not included in this article have visited in Du Quoin through the years. If the reader can recall important persons that have been omitted here, please let me know, that a subsequent feature can be written on this topic.

# Chapter 12

Mother, dear, may I go to swim?
Oh yes, my darling daughter;
Just hang your clothes on a hickory limb,
But don't go near the water.

TWENTY-FIVE years ago Du Quoin boasted one of the finest swimming pools in Southern Illinois. It was called "The Mermaid Swimming Pool" and was located on North Division Street. Built in 1916 by J. A. Griffin, this great boon to summer entertainment was 60 feet wide and 160 feet long.

No longer were Du Quoin mothers obliged to warn their progeny to stay out of creeks and branches around the town. The "ole swimmin' hole" lost its flavor with the younger population and the new pool was instantly popular. Season tickets sold for $5. Adults could swim all evening for 15 cents. A weekly ticket could be bought for 50 cents.

The novelty of the new pool was sufficient to draw large crowds during the early months of its operation. In 1917, however, patronage was greatly stimulated by staging a "Gold Hunt." A $5 gold piece was hidden in the pool by J. J. Bruckshaw of the Du Quoin State Bank. Swimmers were told that the "finder would be the keeper." This feature provided great excitement among the youngsters and no small amount of amusement among the spectators. After several nights of searching the coin was found, at last, by Albert Thill. Several of these "gold rushes" were staged during the summer.

The "Mermaid" was well-equipped with devices and features for entertainment. A slide or "shoot-the-shoot" and a springy diving board added to the pleasures of swimming. Orchestra music was provided on Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights.

Swimming instruction was given and many erstwhile "mud-crawlers" learned the more practical art of swimming. Miss Bess Harvey of St. Louis was employed for a time as swimming instructor. Women and children had use of the pool in the mornings.

A series of racing events were arranged during the summer of 1919. In a swimming meet with Benton, Du Quoin won all events with a team composed of Claire Burch, Laura Center, James Maxton, Perry Center, Robert Tallman and Lester (Dutch) Dunmeier.

The management spared no effort to make the pool popular and to stress the importance of the individual's ability to swim. A series of swimming talks were published daily in the "Call" for a time. The most interesting one was entitled: "Is It a Benefit to Know How to Swim?"

"Fred Engert learned to swim in Mermaid Pool. Later he joined the Heavy Coast Artillery of Uncle Sam; was sent to various training camps in this country and was later transported overseas.

"His boat came to anchor three miles out of Brest, France. The troops were sent ashore on lighters. The one Fred was on was wrecked and he was thrown into the water about two miles from shore. He lost his equipment and, though impeded by his clothing and heavy shoes, he swam to within a short distance of shore when he was picked up by a boat."

An interesting incident lies in connection with "The Mermaid" which bears no relation to swimming. The incident about to be divulged had the people of Du Quoin guessing as well as state authorities in Urbana who were interested to the point that they had instructed an expert to proceed to Du Quoin at once.

"When Jack Griffin paid the last of his tri-daily visits to the pool last evening, oil was found to be running out between the cracks of the pool wall above where it was first discovered. For several days a film of oil had appeared on the surface of the water in the pool. So with this exhibition of flowing "black gold" Mr. Griffin secured workmen and gave these instructions:

"Find that streak of oil behind the wall in the morning, and follow it if it takes you to China. I'd advise you to study up on the Chink lingo tonight, for I believe you'll have to go deep. If you strike a gusher let me know!"

"Down about five feet the workmen discovered an old oil can which had contained a liquid used to seal the seams of the composition roofing, and had been thrown there by workmen when the pool and building were constructed four years earlier."

The bubble had burst and Du Quoin was spared the excitement of a genuine oil boom!

The Mermaid was successfully operated for a number of years before it was finally discontinued

# Chapter 13

FILES of the Du Quoin Evening Call which recorded our entrance in World War I at 1:31 p.m., April 6, 1917, reveal a variety of interesting information in retrospect. Subsequent issues during the war months disclose some striking parallels and sharp contrasts between the two conflicts.

In 1918 the people of Du Quoin had been expecting, and some eagerly anticipating a declaration of war against Germany for several weeks. In contrast, last December's blitzkrieg attack on Pearl Harbor came as a complete surprise, although a clash someday seemed inevitable. A defense program had been underway for over a year with the great peace-time draft of October 16, 1940.

The first draft registration on June 5, 1917, of all men betwen 21 and 31 brought 842 registrations from Du Quoin. The draft board was composed of Dr. J. S. Templeton, Dr. G. F. Meade, and George E. Hincke. On September 12, 1918, all male citizens between th ages of 18 and 45 were registered, but as the armistice was concluded on November 11, a small percentage of these newly-registered men were called into the service.

Du Quoin had organized a company under Major S. N. Hunter. They left for Springfield for intensive training July 19, 1917. News items of home boys' enlistments and their locations appeared. Leslie Edel was at Fort Washington, Md.; Orion Green was stationed at El Paso, Tex.; Harley Croessmann had enlisted in the medical corps and was in Jefferson Barracks, Mo.; Coach Howard Ross had entered the army and was given a leave of absence from the High School faculty. These were only a few who heard the call to arms.

Food prices were advertized by only a few stores during 1917, none of which was a "chain" store. The Wiggle-Waggle was to open a year later in Elkville and was distinctly different in that its novel feature was that no clerks were employed nor credit extended. Each customer simply walked about the store unattended, secured the desired purchases, which were already wrapped and marked, and then passed on to the cashier where the bill was paid. No mention was made, however, that it was a link in a chain system.

Wells' Grocery, Rhine's Cash Grocery, Boyd and Son, and Jacob Lindemood's Feed Store were the principal advertisers of food in the "Call" of 1917. For several weeks Frank Wells advertised 3 loaves of bread for 25 cents, Bob White Soap at 6 bars for 29 cents; white navy beans, 20 cents a pound; lima beans, 20 cents; raisins, 14 cents; Cremo butterine, 35 cents; prunes, 2 pounds for 35 cents.

On May 26, 1917, Rhine's Cash Grocery at 413 N. Division was selling navy beans at 24 cents; bacon at 38c; lard at 28 cents; sugar, 11 pounds for $1, with a $5 order. Lindemood's Feed Store was underselling Rhine's on lard if the housewife bought in 50-pound lots. Best leaf lard was $14 for 50 pounds. Twenty-pound cans, however, increased the price to 38 cents a pound. Five pounds of "Slacker" Peaberry coffee sold for $1; and 6 pounds of "Big Drive" coffee could be bought for $1. The best grade of northern potatoes were selling for $1.65 a bushel.

On June 9, 1917, Boyd and Son were selling 24-pound sacks of flour at $1.80 and $1.90. Sugar was 10 pounds for $1. Pet milk sold at 14 cents a large can. E. C. Harriss as manager of the Churngold Store, was urging people to reduce the high cost of living by buying Churngold, a fancy table margarine, at 36 cents a pound.

Pope's Shoe and Clothing Company in its ad of June 16 caught the defense note with the statement: "Buy at a saving. Save your money and put it in Liberty Bonds." Advertising special merchandise for June this quotation appeared: "The war is beginning to strike home and the buying power of the dollar is growing smaller each day. It costs now as much for a peck of potatoes as you formerly paid for a bushel. The same is true of almost every commodity." Pope's were featuring a special overcoat sale ranging in price from $9.75 to $21.50. A few weeks later suits were selling from $20 to $26.50.

As at present, the junk business was on the uphill climb. L. Oishan, who occupied the Druar building, opposite the Catholic Church, was advertising "The War Is On!" and offering to pay $1 per hundred for rags, 6 cents a pound for rubber and 50 cents a hundred for iron. Within three weeks he had increased his bid on rags to $1.75 per hundred and on iron to 75 cents. Rubber, the precious stuff, remained at 6 cents.

Conway Durham, manager of The Music Store, was advertising a good stock of Edison records with these titles: "Joan of Arc," "Send Me Away with a Smile," "All the World Will be Jealous of Me," "Chu Chin Chow," and "Oloha, Sunset Land." A little laer he was advertising the following sheet music for the piano: "Somewhere in France is the Lily," "Keep the Home Fires Burning," "There's a Long, Long Trail," "Just You," and "Somewhere in France is Daddy."

Du Quoinites of today find the rubber shortage and tire rationing the most vital effect on their lives of the war. In 1917 the first pinch was food. Today granaries and warehouses are bulging with food while Congress dawdles with price control.

In May, 1917, President Wilson appointed Herbert C. Hoover as food administrator to "mobilize the forces of the country in saving food and eliminating waste." Charles Rowe was named Perry County Fod Administrator and Vivtor Croessmann administrator for the city of Du Quoin. According to the "Call" reporter their duties "were to direct and to control the selling of foodstuffs by retailers and to see that the customer does not use any underhand method in obtaining groceries such as obtaining 50 cents worth of sugar from a number of different stores."

Du Quoin people with millions of fellow Americans were asked to observe "wheatless, meatless and heatless days." The sugar bowls were removed from the tables of restaurants. Housewives were pledged to make "victory" bread from corn, rice, or barley flour instead of wheat. Cornbread scratched delicate throats three times a day on wheatless days.

The Department of Agriculture ran a series of articles in the "Call" instructing the citizens how to make their contribution to the winning of the war in the homely matters of kitchen, pantry and garden. Here is a sample:

"Make Your Hens Help Win the War"

"The families that produce their own eggs in their backyard will naturally eat less meat. The meat can go to our ormies and to the armies of our allies. The town family may be sure that by backyard poultry production a practical patriotic service is being performed. Get some hens so they can get busy against the Kaiser!"

Victor Croessmann, as food administrator, saved many a Chanticleer's girl friend from the ax when he issued the edict that no hens were to be sold between Fbruary 11 and April 30, 1918. "This rule is designed to prevent the slaughter of hens between these dates for the purpose of forcing during the months of March and April the largest production of eggs possible."

Since tularemia or rabbit fever was not known in this section, the bunny cotton-tail was receiving considerable attention as a source of food. Recipes for rabbit sausage, pie and ragout were published.

For days a large ad appeared with the word "SAVE" and a list including wheat—use more corn; meat—use more fish and beans; fats—use just enough; sugar—use syrups.

Prices for Du Quoin on Feb. 1, 1918, were set by Mr. Rowe as follows: butter 58 cents; oleo, 38 to 40 cents; cold storage eggs, 65 to 71 cents; ham, 38 cents a pound; bacon, 55 cents; lard, 36 to 38 cents per pound; salmon, pink No. 1 tall, 25 cents and Red Alaska at 35 cents. Sugar was priced at 9 cents a pound. Somehow and somewhere this toothsome commodity got out of line and the price of sugar soared to the heights. Severe restrictions were made. At one time only 2 pounds of sugar per person a month was allowed. On Monday, November 4, 1918, this amount was increased to 3 pounds.

The Saline Electric Company of Du Quoin was notifying the citizens and merchants that the stores were to have two dark nights each week. According to notice received from Fuel Administrator (the "Call" referred to him as "Dictator") H. A. Garfield that "hereafter on Thursday and Sunday nights of each week, all display lights and electric signs are to be shut off." In January 1918, Garfield ordered all manufacturing plants east of the Mississippi that were not engaged in the production of goods essential to the war to shut down for a period of five days and for ten successive Mondays thereafter. All Du Quoin stores were closed on Mondays with the exception of grocery and meat markets which closed at noon.

The automobile received its wartime restrictions on Sunday, August 1, 1918, with a ban on Sunday "joy riding." This news article appeared a few months later:

"A government man was in Du Quoin yesterday giving the once-over to those cars that were flitting about on gasless Sunday. Someone, it appears, had so informed him that Du Quoin was thick with violators of the no-joy-riding request. However, yesterday there was mohe than the usual number of machines out, a condition that was brought about probably by the fact that many were of the opinion that the ban on Sunday riding had been lifted."

Paper was scarce and expensive during the war years. Miners, in need of paper for explosive charges, bought new copies of the Saturday Evening Post for 5 cents which was cheaper and of better quality than any paper they could buy. It is likely that the publishers were pleased with their increased circulation little knowing of this practical use of their publication.

Du Quoin citizens went over the top in Liberty Bond and Thrift Stamp sales. The "Call" carried a full streamer reading "Stamp Out the Kaiser With Thrift Stamps." Ten stores gave coupons on a $50 Liberty Bond which was to be given away.

Parades and patriotic programs accompanied the bond drives. On Thursday, October 25, 1917, a

giant parade of about 1,600 school children headed by Veteran O. B. Ross, started from the post office. Carrying a large American flag, Mr. Ross was accompanied by other veterans. Next followed the boys of Company A, led by Captain June B. Howell. Then automobiles, Boy Scouts, and the students. Judge M. C. Cook had planned to have an aeroplane on hand for the occasion, but atmospheric conditions prevented. Fifteen hundred persons took seats in the Gospel Tabernacle located in Keyes City Park. Speeches were made by Judge B. W. Pope, Judge George W. Wall, Rev. C. J. Eschmann, and Evangelist Steve Burke. Other parades and patriotic rallies were held through the war years.

The Red Cross drives received generous cooperation from Du Quoin citizens. The Red Cross sewing rooms were utilized by ladies' church and fraternal organizations. Benefit shows were given. On February 6, 1918, a war drama in three acts entitled "The Stars and Stripes in France" was presented with half the proceeds for the Red Cross. With the exception of the directors, Mr. and Mrs. Jack H. Kohler, the cast was composed of Du Quoin people. These included: Clyde Mifflin, Adlai Munday, Richard Ross, Frank Horn, June Dickens, Leslie Thornton, Bess Howell, Irene Morris, Leda McGlasson, Celeste Naumer, Marie Thornton, Bothilla Howell, T. A. Reid, Lela Dunn, Clemence Urbain, Nelson B. Layman, and Flora Carr.

In 1918 the Spanish influenza was raging. According to a Springfield bulletin, October 7, 3000 cases were reported in one week. Deaths of many Du Quoin citizens were reported in subsequent issues. In some cases several members of the same family succumbed to the disease. Public meetings were forbidden for weeks. A service flag to be raised October 27 and suspended from Mifflin's Dry Goods Store to Pope's Shoe Store was postponed because of the epidemic.

Deaths of home town boys killed in action or because of disease began to appear. Letters written "somewhere in France" by soldiers revealed they had the Germans on the run. A joyous celebration was held by Du Quoin people on November 11 when the "Call" headline read "WAR ENDS."

This article shows only a few of the contrasts and similarities of the two wars.

This aggregation of musicians, gathered in front of the Grand Theatre in its early days was made up of the following: Left to right, H. Omer Parker, Fritz Franklin, Jim Bosetti, Herry Reynolds, Henry Kern, Joe Kern, W. A. Erwin, John Ritter, Charles Archibald, John Thorwell, Hollingsworth, Wilie Armstrong, Biggart Kell, Herbert Hampton. The colored man in the back row is John Stewart.